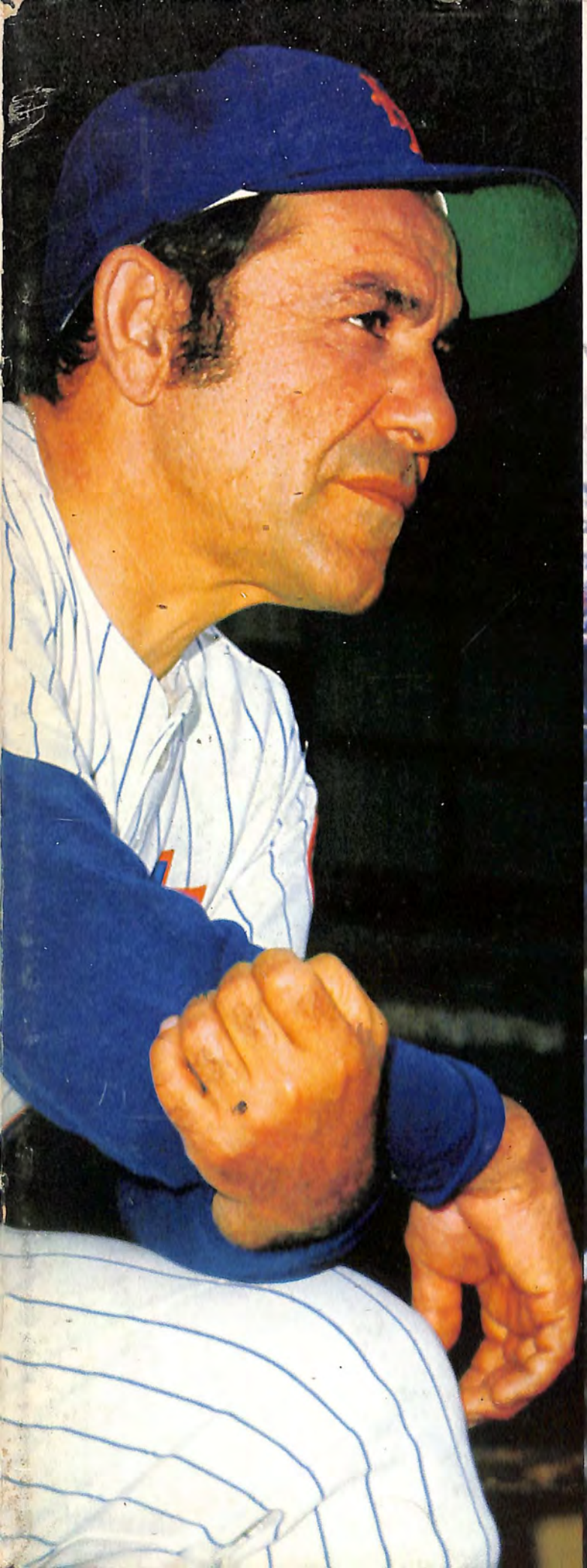

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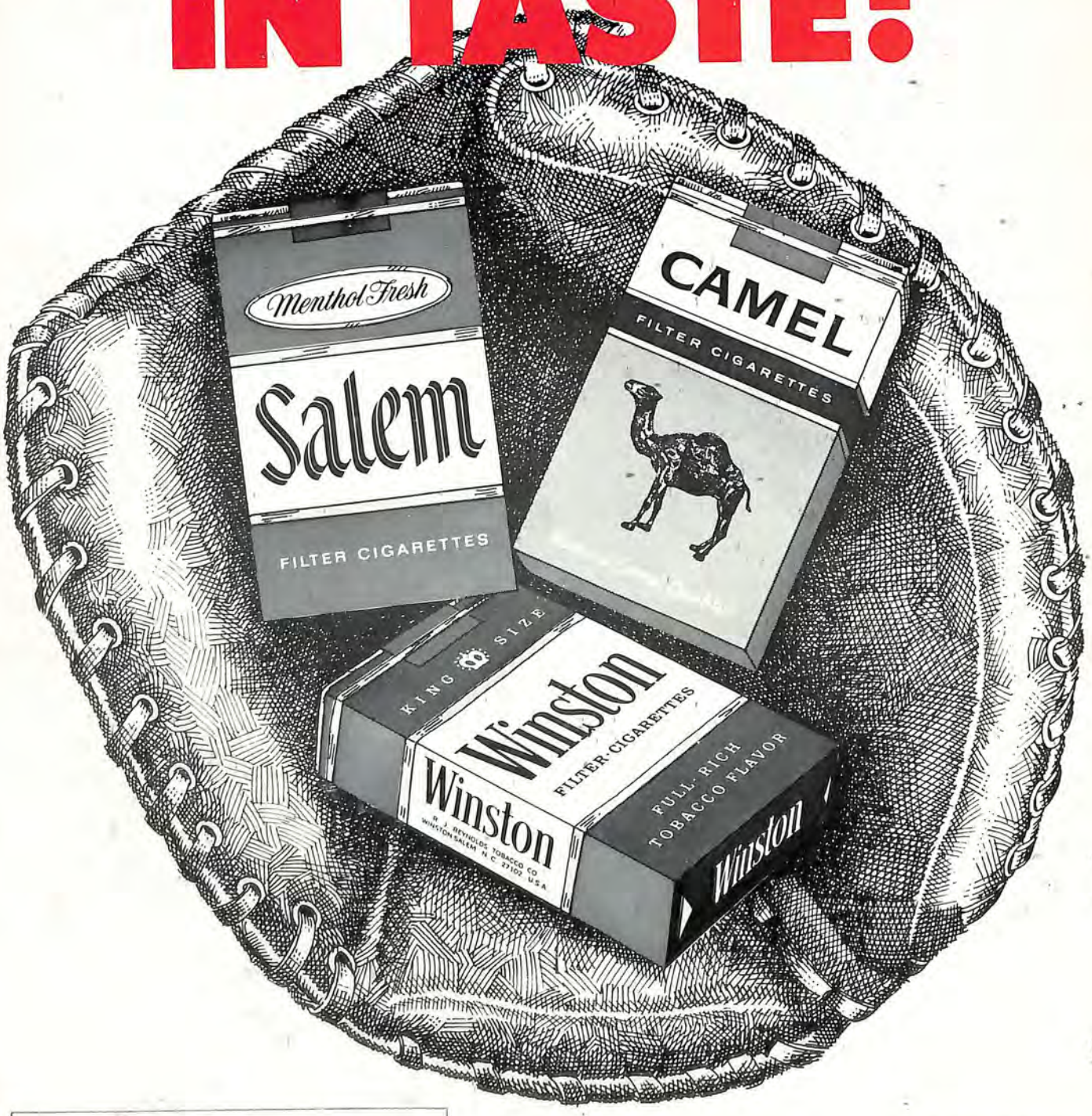

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MIRACLE #2?

Story on Page 5

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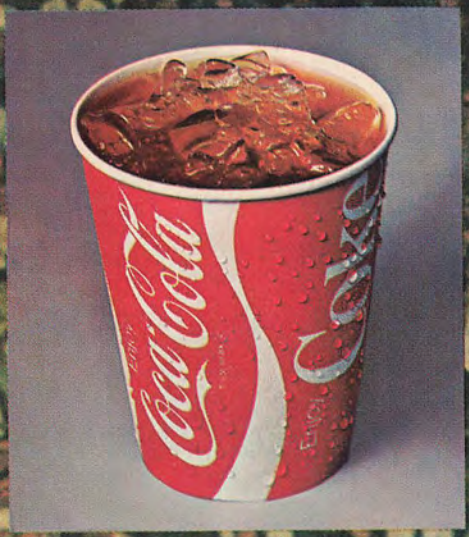

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On behalf of all Baseball, I extend a personal greeting to fans attending the Series and to the fans of America everywhere whose loyalty and devotion are both the mainstay and the magic of the National Game.

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MIRACLE #2: *Is It Hit or Myth?*

BY JACK LANG
Long Island Press

In the beginning it was Casey Stengel. He was the prophet. His words live today.

It was Casey, God love him, who foresaw the miracles we have witnessed. The First Miracle in 1969 and now the Second Miracle.

Funk and Wagnalls College Standard Dictionary describes a miracle as: any wonderful or amazing thing, fact or event; a wonder.

Wasn't it Casey, away back in 1962, who first dubbed the Mets "amazing"? And haven't they been, ever since? And haven't they been "wonderful"!

Theologians differ only slightly in their description of a miracle.

"An event in the natural world," they say, "but out of its established order, possible only by the intervention of a divine power."

Is there anyone who will question the "intervention of divine power" in the two miracles we have witnessed?

In Miracle No. 1, the Mets became the first team in baseball history to go from ninth place to a playoff victory, a league championship and World Series win.

Three championships in one year! Amazing!

It was Tom Seaver that year who suggested that "God is alive and well and living in an apartment in New York."

Certainly someone up there liked those '69 Miracle Mets.

How else can you explain skinny little Al Weis suddenly developing muscles and hitting home runs on successive days in Chicago for a pair of big victories and then going beserk and hitting .455 in the World Series? He wound up with the Babe Ruth Award as hero of the World Series.

Or the pair of 1-0 victories in a September doubleheader in Pittsburgh, with Jerry Koosman and Don Cardwell, two pitchers, driving in the only runs. It was Koosman's only RBI of the season!

BIG THREE: Southpaws Jon Matlack (left) & Jerry Koosman flank Tom Seaver.

And a couple of nights later in St. Louis, Steve Carlton became the first pitcher in major league history to strike out 19 batters in one game and lost! Because Rocky Swoboda hit a pair of two-run homers.

You need more convincing it was a miracle?

What about those fantastic catches by Tommie Agee and Swoboda against the Orioles?

And how come the only time all year a ball that hit a batter landed in the dugout. And Gil Hodges was able to come out and show a spot of shoe polish on the ball.

"Trying to stop the Mets was like trying to stop an avalanche," said Orioles' Veep Frank Cashen after it was all over.

As we all know, avalanches are not man-made.

A miracle? Divine intervention? Amazing? You be the judge.

Try and explain Miracle No. 2 with any logic. For decades, the 1914 Boston Braves were heralded as the Miracle Braves because they came from last place on July 4th to win a pennant. And then the World Series. But what about 1973 Mets, almost 60 years later? They came from last place on August 30th to win.

Here was a team that set all-time major league records. Not for hitting or pitching or fielding . . . but for players placed on the disabled list. Would you believe eight?

At one time or another, Jerry Grote, Bud Harrelson, Cleon Jones, Willie Mays, John Milner, George Theodore and Jerry May were on the disabled list. Harrelson even managed to make it twice. Little Bud either set or tied a major league mark with two fractures in one season. First he fractured his hand when he fell on it making a double play in Cincinnati. Later he fractured a chest bone.

In addition, Grote fractured the wrist on his throwing arm and Jon Matlack miraculously—there's that word again—escaped with his life when he was hit in the head with a line drive. All he suffered was a fractured skull. But 11 days later he was pitching again.

Next to trainers Tom McKenna and Joe Deer and the stretcher-bearers, the busiest man at Shea was Dr. Peter LaMotte. The Mets dubbed him their MVP —Most Valuable Physician.

While the Mets kept the revolving door at Roosevelt Hospital whirling, they also found themselves spending considerable time on the escalator marked "down." Injuries that crippled the team for a second year in succession dropped the Mets into the National League East basement on June 28. There were no thoughts of Miracle No. 2. Just cries of

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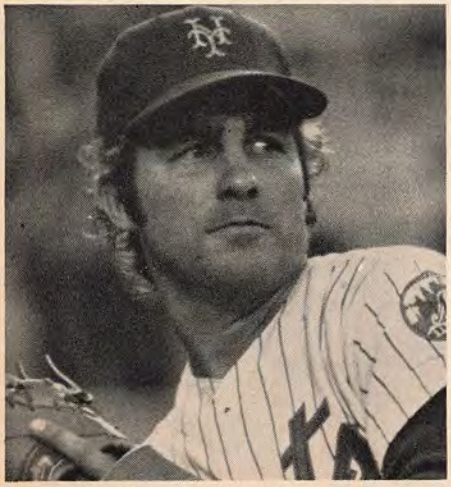
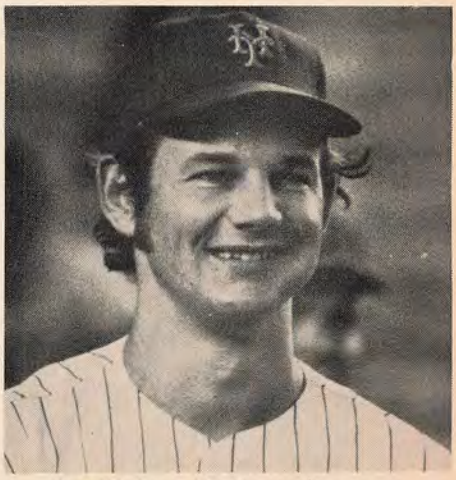


Ken Boswell: Man in a pinch.



Ron Hodges: Youth on the move.

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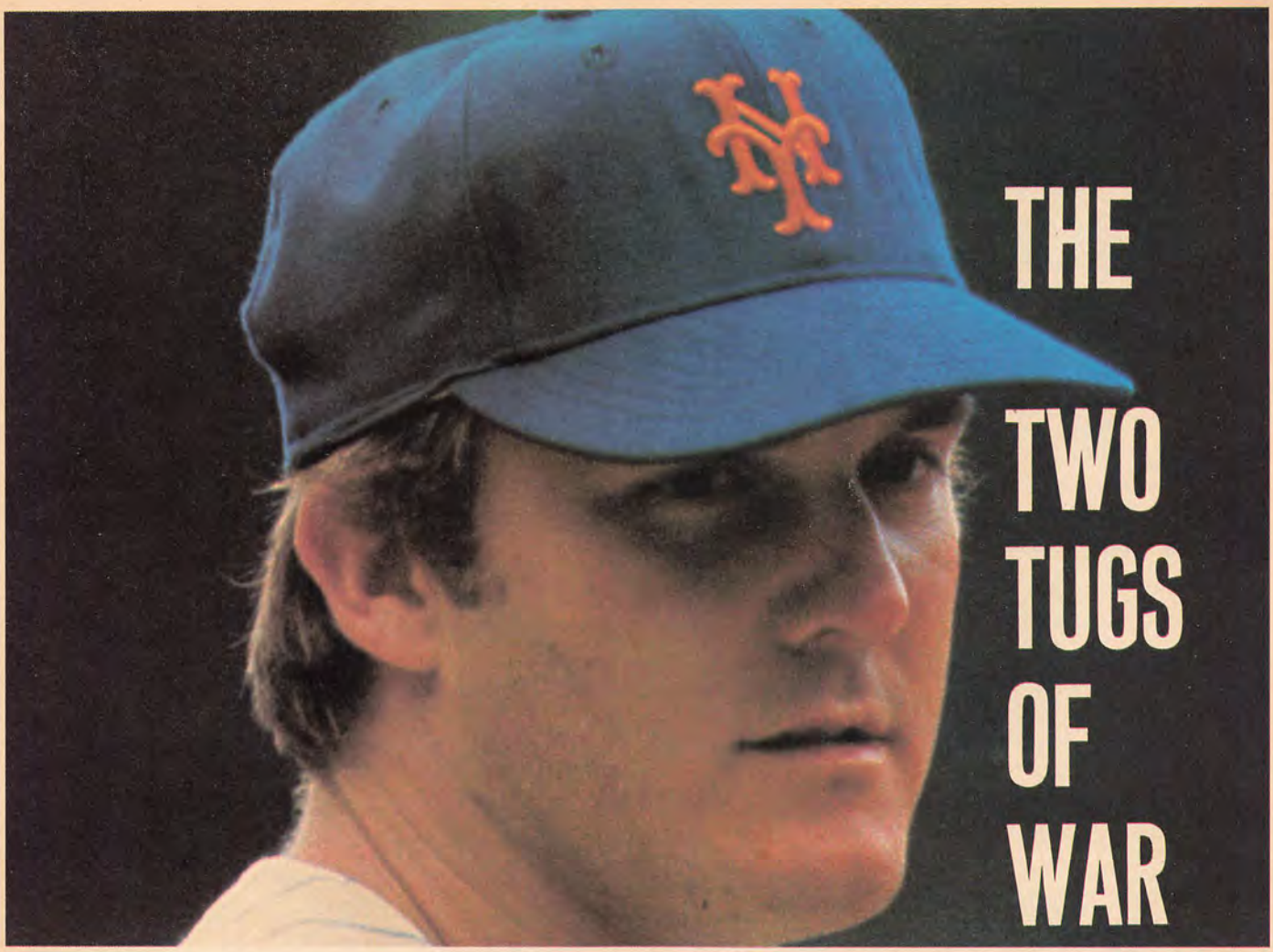

THE TWO TUGS OF WAR

When the baseball season opened on April 6, the words were still ringing in Tug McGraw's ears: "I believe he is the best relief pitcher in the big leagues."

They were spoken by McGraw's boss, Bob Scheffing, the general manager of the Mets, when he signed the fresh-faced left-hander to his eighth varsity contract last winter. But before the shadows of summer lengthened on both McGraw and the Mets, the best relief pitcher in the big leagues was locked in the grip of a mystifying slump that grew worse—and more mystifying—as the team slid toward last place.

"People think I planned it that way to prove how valuable I was to the team," McGraw quipped later. "They don't know how I was climbing the walls most of the summer. I was just throwing the same stuff to the same hitters I used to get out. But now they were teeing off on me, and after that I lost my confidence as well as my best stuff."

Tug McGraw. Frank Edwin McGraw of Vallejo, California. The first Met pitcher to beat the great Sandy Koufax. The exuberant one with the snapping curveball and tantalizing screwball. The young pitcher who was given a choice when they sent him back to the minors in 1968: Be a starter in the sticks or a reliever in the bigs.

"That wasn't tough to decide," he remembered later. "Sure, I'd rather be a starting pitcher. But the idea is to play in the big leagues, so I went down and learned how to finish games instead of starting them."

When Gil Hodges brought him back in 1969, McGraw started four games and finished 38; he won 9, lost 3, had a 2.25 earned-run average and had a big piece of the action during the Miracle season. In 1970, he started zero games, finished 57. The next year, one start and 50 relief jobs. And last year, zero starts and 54 bullpen calls. During his last two seasons: 19 wins, 10 losses, a stunning earned-run average of 1.70 BOTH years.

No wonder Scheffing called him "the best." No wonder the Mets made no bones about the fact that he would earn more money than any relief pitcher in history. No wonder that, at the age of 28, he ranked as the man behind the pitching staff that carried the Mets hopes of regaining the top. And no wonder that everybody was stumped when he suddenly "lost it" after a good beginning.

He had picked up 27 "saves" in 1972, and he picked up No. 1 behind Tom Seaver on opening day of 1973. Six weeks later, he got into the 19-inning thing in Los Angeles, pitched five tingling innings, three times got out of bases-loaded jams, saw the Met finally win it and then said: "I've never pitched in so much trouble in my life."

By then, though, the Mets were falling like flies as one injury after another waylaid the roster. From first place in May, the team hit bottom in July and stayed there until the end of August. And McGraw, meanwhile, was pitching in the worst luck—with the worst results—of his career.

They X-rayed his elbow, and found nothing. They viewed his motion on film, and found nothing. They even started him in a game, and found nothing. He didn't save many games, and he didn't win one until August 22.

Then it happened. As the lame and the halt recovered their health, McGraw recovered his touch. In 15 straight appearances, he won four more games and saved 11. During one stretch, the club won 11 games—and in all 11, McGraw

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YOGI

• Most People Take The Easy Way Out
• For Berra's It's The Easy-Going Way In

BY DICK YOUNG
New York Daily News

When Yogi Berra was 13, he and Charley Riva had a fight. They punched each other for about a minute, and then Yogi said, what the hell are we fighting for?

"I don't know," said Charley Riva, and they put their arms around each other.

That was the last time Yogi Berra can remember fighting, in anger. He did some boxing for the Italian-American club ("I used to get five bucks a fight, and in them days that was a lot of dough"), and when the navy put him at Bainbridge Naval Station, he climbed into the ring a few times there . . .

". . . In purple trunks, weighing a hunnert forty-nine an' a half, from Saint Loo-us, Mizzooo-ree, Yo-geee Berrrra. . ."

"I was 5-and-0, and they wanted me on the boxing team, but I said, no thanks."

Yogi Berra doesn't like to fight, never did. God rarely combined such a tough-looking face with such a gentle soul.

"He's a nice guy, too nice," I have heard people say. Newspapermen say it. Some of his players have said it. That's the one rap on him as a manager, he's too nice. A manager should be a louse, they say.

"I can be tough when I have to," insists Yogi Berra. "I just don't think yelling at players does any good. I'd rather take a guy over to the side, quietly, and tell him if he does something wrong."

Jerry Koosman remembers that. He was disgruntled, and starting to show it. He felt he was being yanked too early. Yogi decided it was time to have it out.

"We talked it over like gentlemen," says Koosman. "He explained all the things a manager must take into consideration: Tug was strong then . . . the number of pitches I had thrown . . . the weather . . . the manager not only observing my stuff, but talking to the catcher. He made me understand that a manager cannot allow his individual feelings to interfere.

"After that," says Kooz, "when he did take me out, I understood. And he understood me a little more. Now, when he takes me out, it doesn't bother me anymore."

"Yogi doesn't blow his stack when a player makes a mechanical mistake. It galls Berra to see mental mistakes, perhaps because Yogi was born with a baseball instinct. When a player rocks things

Whitey Ford and man he was in "receivership" with at Yankee Stadium.

up, Yogi invariably will wait till the next day. Rarely will he order the player into his office, for that can attract attention. He will spot the player loitering alone in the clubhouse, or a corner of the dugout, or in pre-game practice, and will walk over to him casually.

"About that throw yesterday," Berra will say, stressing where the cutoff man stood, the man the throw didn't hit. At the end of the private lesson, Yogi will say, "Do you understand?"

"Okay, I get it."

"Good, the next time you make that mistake, it'll cost you two hundred."

"Yogi is a lot like Hodges was," says Bob Scheffing, the GM. "Win or lose, he never blows his cool. I like that in a manager. You see a lot of managers who are great leaders while the team is going good. Then, the team starts to go the other way, and so does the manager. He starts rapping the players, and the scouts and everybody.

"Yogi never raps a player. His whole approach is very professional, just like Gil was. It hurts him to lose, as much as anybody, but he keeps it inside."

The "Too Nice" label was pinned on Yogi Berra in 1964. That's the year he first managed in the bigs. He succeeded Ralph Houk, who was stepping up to the front office. Yogi took over a team with stars like Mantle and Ford, and a musical talent named Phil Linz. Mickey and Whitey were his friends. As it is written in the Old Testament: with friends like that, who needs enemies.

The old friends figured good old Yog, the nice guy, wouldn't mind if they stayed up another hour or two, had another drink or two. Inevitably, word got back to the front office: Berra was losing control of the club.

Of course, the team was losing ball games, too. It never quite occurs to anyone that there is a discipline deficiency. The combination of the two brought Ralph Houk a-running to see what was going on.

What had hit the newspapers, particularly, was Phil Linz' harmonica concert in the back of the team bus. The Yankees had lost a particularly tough game, and Berra thought it was not the time for revelry.

"Hey Linz, shut it off!" yelled Berra. The manager sits in the front seat of the bus. That is protocol. Linz was in the back. Between were a lot of voices. Evidently, Linz didn't hear the command. He blew obliviously into the mouth organ.

Berra bolted from his seat, rushed down the aisle and slapped the harmonica from Linz' hand. A startled hush accompanied the Yanks the rest of the way.

"It wasn't really much," Yogi says. "We kidded about it later, Phil and me."

Ralph Houk apparently thought differently. He decided Yogi couldn't handle

Met skippers three: Wes Westrum, his predecessor, Casey Stengel, and Yogi.

the players; was too friendly with them, that they took advantage. Besides, it was obvious the team couldn't win under Berra.

Something went wrong. The Yankees stormed down the stretch to take the pennant. "I think we won something like 31 of our last 41," says Berra. They clinched the pennant, battled the Cardinals in the World Series without the help of Whitey Ford, who had vascular trouble, and they lost it in Game 7 to Bob Gibson.

Before Game 7, Yogi wished his men well and told some of them he didn't expect to be back again. They brushed off that kind of talk as ludicrous. But Yogi had a gut feeling about such things. Lately, he and Carmen hadn't been invited to dinner parties by Ralph and Betty Houk. Little things like that trigger warnings within instinctive people.

"He knows what's going on," Casey Stengel would say whenever Berra's name came up. "They kid around about him not having much education, but there isn't much about this game he hasn't learned, because I ask him questions all the time, and he tells me the answers."

Kidding Yogi Berra's grammar, his gaudy malaprops, became legend in baseball. The time they honored him, and Berra expressed his cloudy-eyed appreciation is immortal: "I want to thank those who made this night necessary."

Newsmen, designing to build the image, put lines in his mouth:

There was supposed to be the evening Carmen Berra came home from the movies.

"Where you been?" said Yogi.

"I took Timmy to see Dr. Zhivago."

"What's wrong with him now?"

Timmy is one of three Berra boys, the middle one. He is starring now at the University of Massachusetts as wide receiver and runback man. Larry, the eldest brother, named after dad, gave catching a shot, but came up with a bad knee and couldn't cut it. Dale, now at Montclair High in New Jersey is giving all sports a shot, football, baseball and his favorite, hockey. "Dale could be the best athlete of all of them," says Yogi.

A couple of weeks ago, as the Amazin' Mets were making their belated drive to the top, newsmen crowded into the manager's office to ask him about the victory just concluded. Yogi answered them directly, patiently, and then as they drifted off into the adjoining room to interview the ballplayer, Berra rushed across his office to switch on the TV set. "Gotta see how Timmy's team did," he said, turning to a football roundup.

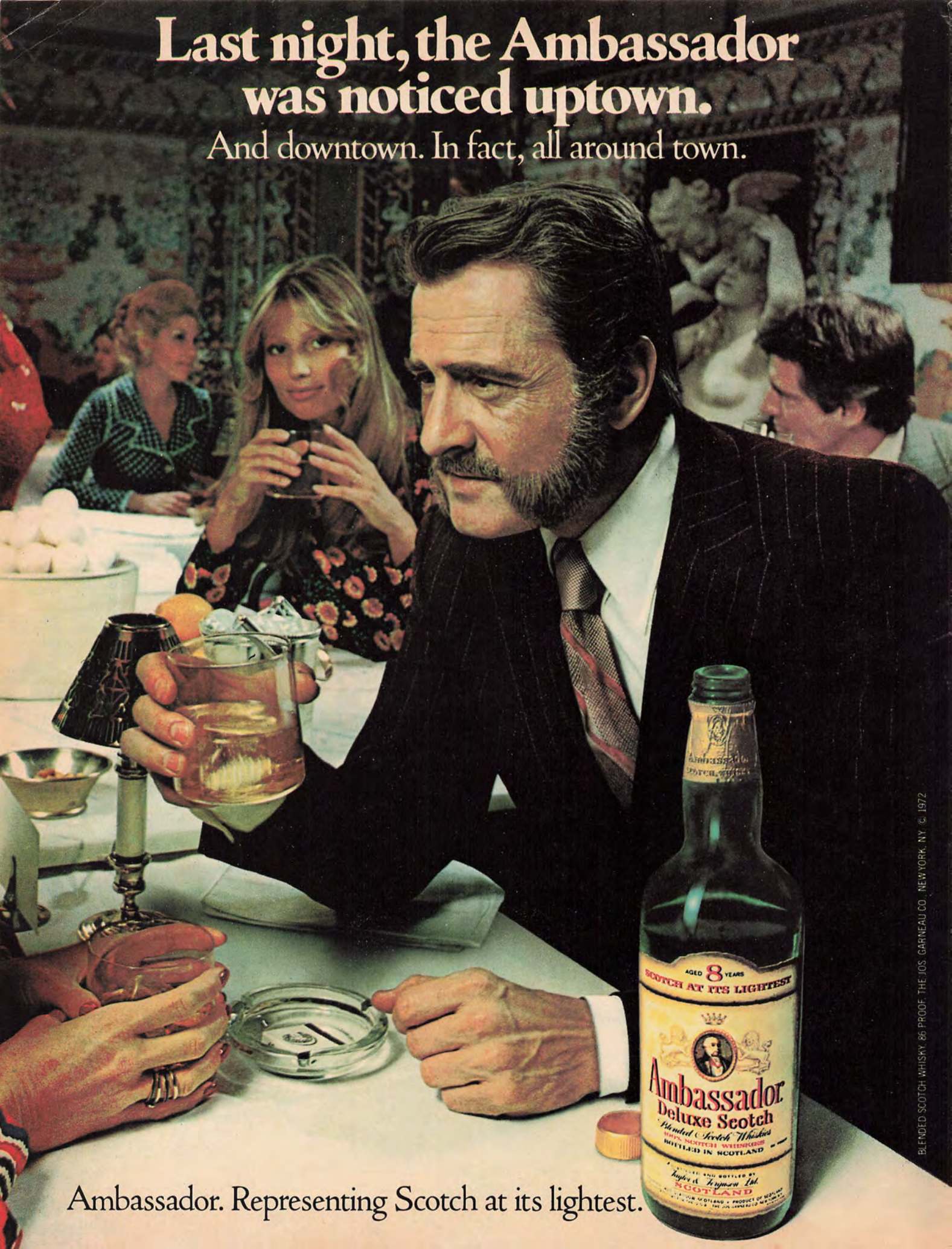
The warmth of the Berra family, the closeness of Yogi with his three sons, comes through the tube from a TV commercial now making the rounds. It deals

Continued on 52

Berra and chief sponsor, late Mets' president and Yankee GM, George M. Weiss.

Last night, the Ambassador was noticed uptown.

And downtown. In fact, all around town.



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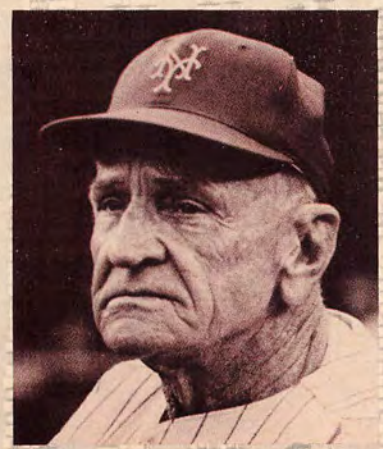

CASEY STENGEL
(Vice President)

JAMES K. THOMSON
(Vice President)

Scheffing: Touched All The Bases

On January 19, 1970, five days after Johnny Murphy succumbed to a heart attack, 56-year-old Robert Boden Scheffing was unanimously appointed vice president and general manager of the Mets as the successor to a baseball architect who needed only two years to blueprint a world championship at Shea Stadium.

With that giant step the trusted lieutenant of Johnny Murphy had come full cycle: from the sandlot diamonds of semi-pro ball to the bus circuit farm system of the Cardinals; to minor league manager at the age of 24; to a run at the big leagues as catcher, coach, manager, scout and broadcaster; to a front office apprenticeship as director of player development and special assignment liaison agent; to responsibility for a major league organization.

For baseball, it all started in the Trolley League, a semi-pro circuit covering the St. Louis river borders of Missouri and Illinois. For the Mets it all started with a Christmas card.

Taking second things first:

Brief notes supplemented the 1965 Scheffing holiday cards to several general managers, expressing interest in possible openings. Eddie Stanky had recently resigned as farm director of the Mets to become manager of the White Sox, and Bing Devine subsequently explored a replacement with Chicago general manager Ed Short. The latter recalled Scheffing's note and passed along the information to Devine (at the time the late George M. Weiss' assistant), who was unable to reach Scheffing at his Scottsdale home.

Devine, spending Christmas at home in suburban St. Louis, remembered Scheffing's mother lived in St. Louis. He telephoned, learned that Scheffing and his wife Mary were right there holidaying, too, and arranged a meeting in a supermarket which also had a lunch counter. Two hot dogs and a couple of soft drinks later Scheffing accepted the position as Mets director of player development.

Taking first things second:

The $2.50-per-game scale for a Trolley League appearance — either behind the plate or at third base—contributed toward the Depression Era household. His efforts caught the eye of a Cardinal Scout who arranged a catching tryout culminated by a $75-a-month farm system contract extended by Branch Rickey.

It was 16 years before he got to play for the Cardinals. They got him from Cincinnati on waivers on August 1, 1951, and 12 games later his playing career came to an end when St. Louis released him.

The GM and the women in his life: vivacious spouse Mary & proud mom Helen.

In the interim it was such way stops as Greenwood, Greensburg (Pa.), Albany (Ga.) and Mobile. During the 1938 campaign at Mobile he suffered a fractured shoulder in a plate collision, was told by a doctor he'd never play again and accepted the Cardinal offer to become a Class D non-playing manager in 1938 at Washington in the Penn State Association.

However, 24-year-old manager Scheffing found himself without a first baseman, gave himself the job and proceeded to lead the league in RBI while batting .330. So they moved him up to Triple A as a catcher at Rochester, only to expose him to the draft of 1940, when the Chicago Cubs selected him.

A World War II three-year Navy hitch stopped him from rounding out a decade in Chicago, and on June 7, 1950, he went to the Reds for Ron Northey.

After finally making it to the Cardinals 14 months later for the last dozen games of his active career, Bob coached in 1952, 1953 and 1954.

The following May he was dispatched to Los Angeles as a pinch manager for Bill Sweeney and directed the Cubs' No. 1 farm club to a third place finish. The next year he spread-eagled the PCL field, winning the pennant by 16 games.

When Phil Wrigley decided to make a change in Chicago during the autumn of 1956, he brought Scheffing in to replace Stan Hack. In three years he got the cellar Cubs within 12 games of first place. And on the final day of that third season Wrigley stunned the baseball world by dismissing him. ("He's still one of the nicest men I've ever known . . . and it's a funny thing, but when he fired me he wanted me to stay on as a vice president.").

In 1960 Scheff coached for Charley Dressen in Milwaukee and the following year he returned to the dugout as a big league manager in Detroit, where he succeeded Joe Gordon. He promptly piloted the Tigers to second place with 101 victories. Only two other managers in Detroit history — both in the Hall of Fame—had boasted 100-game seasons: Mickey Cochrane in 1934 and Hughey Jennings in 1915.

After finishing fourth in 1962, Scheffing was replaced by Dressen in June of 1963. He retained an association with Detroit through 1965, working in the broadcasting booth with Ernie Harwell in '64, and doing scouting chores in '65.

As Director of Player Development, Bob was responsible, in a large measure, for Jerry Koosman, Tom Seaver, Nolan Ryan and Jim McAndrew, among others on the vaunted Met pitching staff that contributed so handsomely to the Met Miracle of 1969.

As a special assignment operative on whom Murphy relied with great confidence, Scheffing also had a hand in the decisions that brought Tommie Agee, Al Weis and Ray Sadecki to the Mets. He was the man, too, who recommended drafting Wayne Garrett, whom he had watched in the Arizona Instructional League.

The Scheffings have been sun-worshipping residents of Scottsdale (Ariz.) since 1957, and also have a Bayside apartment. Bob and vivacious former Mary O'Connell of St. Louis were married in 1941.

See Page 36 for a pictorial story of Bob Scheffing's career.

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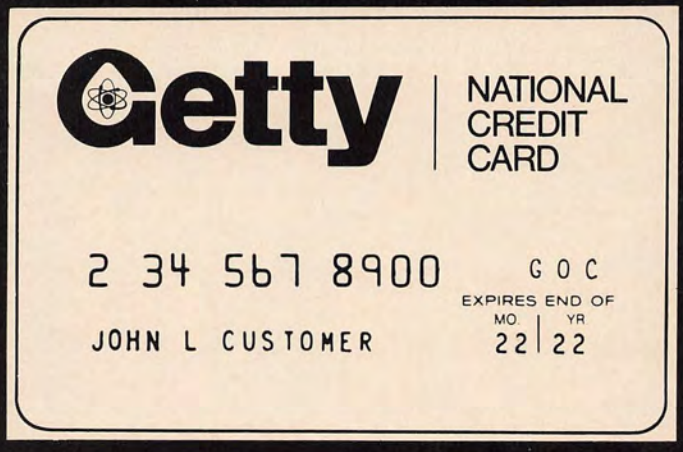

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INSTANT REPLAY: MIRACLE #1

Telling It Like It Was

The 1969 World Series climaxed Miracle No. 1 as the Mets defeated Baltimore by sweeping four straight games after losing the opener.

Never higher than ninth since being awarded an expansion franchise in 1962, the Mets captured the nation's imagination with a remarkable late-season surge that annexed the Eastern Division title in handy fashion and maintained their momentum against Atlanta's Western Division winners in three straight games.

The Orioles made a shambles of the American League's Eastern Division and then wiped out their Western Division counterparts, Minnesota, in three games.

The Series got underway in Baltimore on October 11, with Tom Seaver opposing lefty Mike Cuellar. Oriole leadoff man Don Buford laced Seaver's second pitch over the right field wall. In the fourth Elrod Hendricks singled, Dave Johnson walked and Mark Belanger singled for one run. Cuellar then hit a single for another, and Buford doubled to run the score to 4-0. The Mets scored in the seventh on Al Weis' sacrifice fly, but Brooks Robinson made a great pick-up and throw of pinch hitter Rod Gaspar's slowly hit grounder to retire the side. The Mets threatened again in the ninth, but Cuellar induced pinch hitter Art Shamsky to roll out with two runners on base.

In the second game Jerry Koosman revived memories of Don Larsen's 1956 World Series no-hitter with the Yankees as he tossed six hit-less frames and nursed a 1-0 lead into the seventh, the result of Donn Clendenon's fourth inning homer. But Paul Blair singled to left to open the frame, stole second with two out and scored on Brooks Robinson's single up the middle.

Dave McNally retired the first two Mets in the ninth, but Ed Charles, Jerry Grote and Weis stroked successive singles to left and the Mets went ahead 2-1. After Koosman walked Frank Robinson and Boog Powell with two out in the bottom of the inning, Gil Hodges replaced him with Ron Taylor. Brooks Robinson then grounded a 3-1 pitch to Charles. After some hesitation as to whether or not to try for an unassisted force, Charles finally threw to first for the game's final out.

The teams resumed Tuesday in Shea Stadium, where the Mets won a 5-0 decision—largely on the strength of Tommie Agee's one-man show that must rank with the greatest ever seen in World Series play.

Agee began his heroics in the first inning with a home run off Jim Palmer. In the fourth with two on, he raced to the 396-foot sign in left center to make a backhanded fingertip catch of Hendricks' bid for a triple. In the seventh, with two out and the bases loaded, he made a headlong diving grab of Blair's line shot that was going up the alley in right center for extra bases. Either play stands comparison with those of Al Gionfriddo in the 1947 Series and Willie Mays in 1954. By himself, Agee was the difference of six runs in the game.

Besides Agee's homer, the Mets scored two runs in the second on Gary Gentry's double; another in the sixth on Jerry Grote's double, and added the last one in the eighth on Ed Kranepool's homer off reliever Dave Leonhard. Gentry worked until the seventh, when he loaded the bases on walks and was replaced by Nolan Ryan.

Seaver won the fourth game, 2-1, in ten innings. Clendenon hit a home run off Cuellar in the second and the run stood up until the ninth. Frank Robinson and Powell singled, and then Ron Swoboda made a diving grab of Brooks Robinson's line drive. A run scored after the catch. Swoboda's play was one of the fielding gems of the Series and prevented a second run which surely would have come in had not the catch been made.

In the tenth, with Dick Hall on the mound, Buford misplayed Grote's fly into a two-base hit. After Weis was inten-

Continued on 55

Story of a love affair between a living legend and a city: New York's inspiring tribute to Wondrous Willie Mays. (Circle): Tear-stained Willie pays respects to Baseball's First Lady, Mrs. Joan Payson. (Lower right): Willie responds to ovation.

I'm a sentimental slob. I have to believe God made the Mets win the pennant because he wanted to see Willie Mays play one more time.

If the Amazin Mets hadn't got here, it would be all over now. Willie would be done. He announced his retirement last month, but with the great expectation of all Met fans, the refusal to say die, he kept his options open. "I want to remain on the active list to the end of the season," he said, "becaue I want to play in one more World Series."

Somewhere in his 42-year-old body, I expect, there is one game-winning hit left. With the dramatic flair that is Willie Mays, with his incomparable ability to rise to a special occasion, there must be a winning hit coming up, or a brilliant game-saving catch. God wouldn't have gone through all this trouble, and then have Willie Mays stiff-out in the World Series, would He?

Willie Mays prays, not just now that he's getting old, like a lot of people do. He can remember praying in 1951, with Bobby Thomson at bat in the ninth inning of that unforgettable playoff game. The Giants were two runs down; two on, one out. In the on-deck circle, fiddling nervously with his bat, was Willie Mays, rookie.

"Please Lord, do something so that I won't have to go up there," he prayed.

Bobby Thomson hit a season-ending home run, which everyone had to admit was really something. "I was frozen, frightened so stiff, I was the last one to get to the plate to congratulate him, and I was the closest," Willie says, whenever he tells the story.

He was 20 then. He had been playing baseball with men since he was 14. Black men at first, and then the New York Giants bought him from the Birmingham Black Barons for $15,000—the ball club getting 10 and Willie 5. In those days, you could buy a home and a new car for five thousand, and have something left over, so Willie Mays, 18, bought a two-bedroom home for his family, and a Mercury for himself. Then he went to Trenton, N. J., a Giant farm, to play baseball. He batted .353.

"Going from the Birmingham Black Barons to Trenton was like going to a little league," says Willie.

They jumped him to the top farm club next, Minneapolis, the Triple-A American Association. He was there long enough to play 35 games. He was hitting .477 when Leo Durocher decided the Giants could use him.

This time, it wasn't like a little league. Willie went for zilch in his first 12 at-bats. He was distraught. He ran to the manager and pleaded to be sent back to Minneapolis. Leo Durocher calmed him down, reassured him he would hit. "It's only a matter of time."

Soon after, Mays hit homer No. 1 off Warren Spahn, the first of 660. If he hadn't spent two years in the Army, 1952 and '53, he feels that Hank Aaron would

have been chasing Willie Mays' lifetime record this past season, not Babe's Ruth's.

"When I came out, I was hitting 40 and 50 a year," Mays recalls. "I think I would have hit maybe 80 more in the two years I missed."

He says this when you ask him about it. He doesn't volunteer it. "I don't go for the ifs," he adds quickly. "I've had a wonderful life."

It sounds strange to hear a man of 42, a man in his prime, speaking in past tense, but that's how it goes in baseball. At 42, Willie Mays is done as a player, leaving us with our memories of him, the great catches, the great hits, the exciting base-running.

The greatest catch?

"It was really a catch-and-throw," says Willie Mays. "We were playing the Dodgers in the Polo Grounds. I had made it up with Don Mueller just before the pitch that anything I could reach I'd take, because Don couldn't throw.

"Billy Cox was on third. Furillo hit the ball to right-center. I ran like an S-O-B and made the catch, then the only way I could throw was to pivot in the air, which I did. I threw right for Whitey Lockman's chest. He was the cutoff man. Luckily, the ball didn't sink. It went on a fly to Wes Westrum. He had the plate blocked off, and made the tag."

It was a rave play. The game went into overtime, Willie remembers, and Wes Westrum won it with a homer. In the clubhouse the newsmen asked the Dodger manager about Mays. "I gotta see him do it again," was the immortal quote.

Another No. 1: Willie Mays' most productive day at the plate: Four homers in one game, at Milwaukee, 1961. "I was up five times that day. The third time, I hit it to the center field fence. Hank Aaron caught it."

"The most important hit I think I ever got was in 1962. We were tied with the Dodgers for first place on the last day of the season, and had to win to get into the playoffs with them. We were playing Houston, and the score was tied 0-0 in the 8th. I hit a home run off Dick Farrell. I say it was my most productive hit, because everybody made money off that."

Willie Mays will go down as the favorite all-time player of many an American. Who is the favorite of this favorite?

"Joe DiMaggio," he says instantly. He admits he didn't see Joe play that much, but didn't have to. "I saw enough to know he was a complete ballplayer. He's my man. Everything he did was smoooooth."

The words "complete ballplayer" are sprinkled through any Willie Mays dialogue. He will say, for example, when somebody mentions superstars: "I don't consider myself a superstar. I consider myself a complete ballplayer." That means: field, run, throw, hit for average, hit for power.

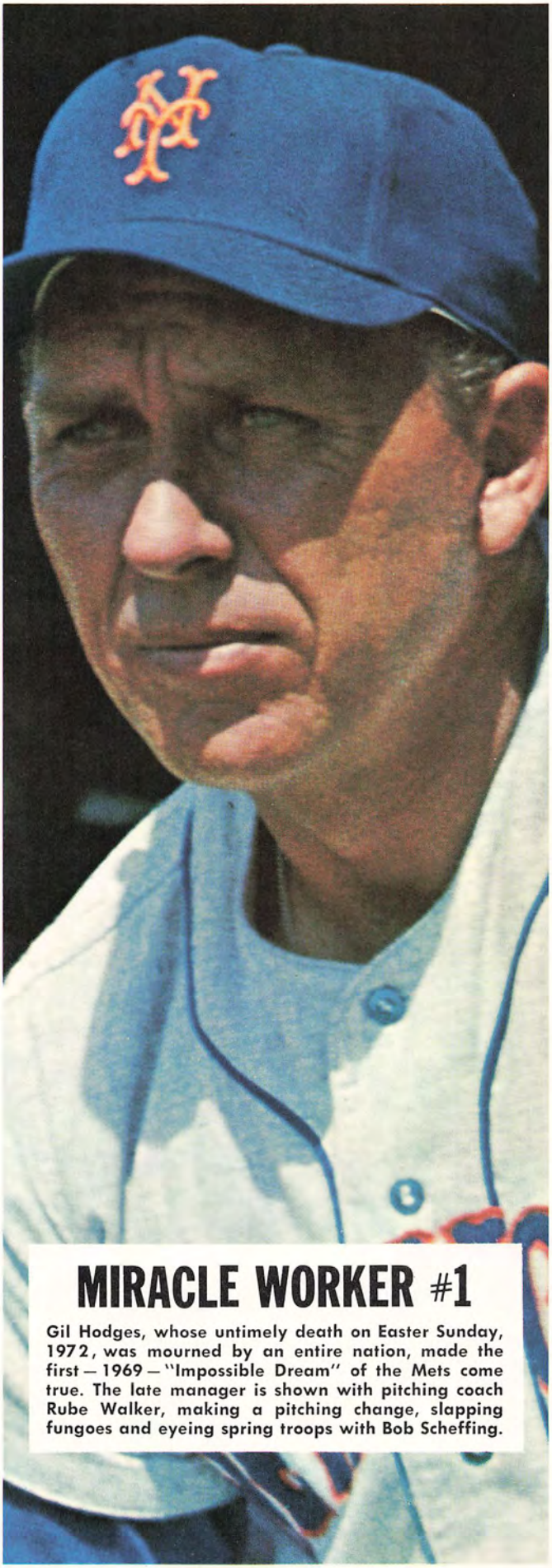
For this reason, he isn't overly fond of the Designated Hitter rule. "I like the part that makes jobs for old ballplayers, like it did for Orlando Cepeda," he says, "but I don't think it's good for baseball. It takes something away from the game. I like the strategy of pinch-hitting for the pitcher, and making moves. And I think the fans do."

The fans of New York have always been something special to Willie Mays, and he to them. San Francisco was his mistress, never feeling quite sure it belonged to him. And then he came back, at age 40, with little more left than the desire.

"Mrs. Payson and I believed," said Don Grant, "that Willie Mays should finish his career in New York."

Willie concurs with the Mets' board chairman. At his farewell press conference, he said, "I don't think I could have finished this year in San Francisco. The people would have run me out of town, hitting two-eleven. But the people in New York had seen me play, and they let me make up my own mind."

Of the 44 hits he made this year, and some of the catches, he won a few games, and in a race as fiercely contested as this has been, a few games made the difference. And now, maestro . . . one more time.



MIRACLE WORKER #1

Gil Hodges, whose untimely death on Easter Sunday, 1972, was mourned by an entire nation, made the first — 1969 — "Impossible Dream" of the Mets come true. The late manager is shown with pitching coach Rube Walker, making a pitching change, slapping fungoes and eyeing spring troops with Bob Scheffing.

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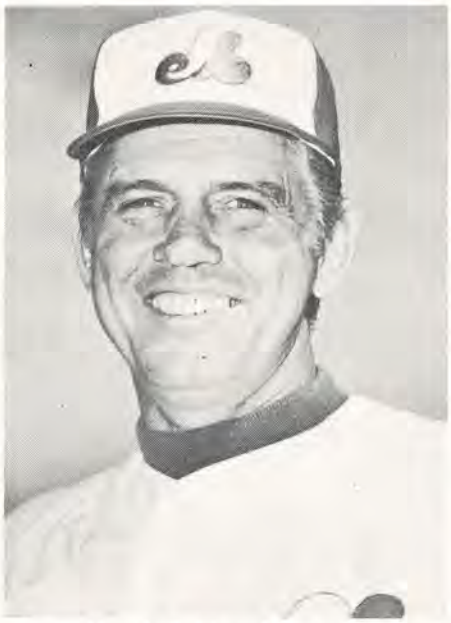
BEST METS' DEAL A STONE'S THROW AWAY, BY GEORGE

BY MAURY ALLEN
New York Post



Gene Mauch (left) and George Stone have something in common: "throw-in" label.

More than a quarter of a century ago Gene Mauch, the manager of the Montreal Expos, was traded by the Brooklyn Dodgers to Pittsburgh with Kirby Higbe, Cal McLish and Dixie Howell for outfielder Al Gionfriddo and $100,000. Mauch was the throw-in.

Seven months later Mauch was thrown back. He was traded to Brooklyn again with Preacher Roe and Billy Cox for Hal Gregg, Vic Lombardi and Dixie Walker.

Why did Mauch shuffle back and forth twice between Pittsburgh and Brooklyn in those famous deals?

"Hell," he said years later, "somebody had to carry the money."

Baseball players have been traded and sold ever since the game began professionally more than a century ago. Owners switch players around almost as rapidly as kids switch around their bubble gum cards in small-fry trades.

Sometimes the trades are solely for money. Boston saved its franchise with the trade of Babe Ruth to the Yankees for $125,000 in 1920. Ruth merely saved baseball.

The Dodgers once traded their Reading franchise for a ball player named Carl Furillo. Boston bought the Louisville franchise to get ownership rights to a kid shortstop named Pee Wee Reese and then traded him to Brooklyn when their own manager-shortstop, Joe Cronin, wasn't ready to quit playing.

The Mets, in their sweet old days, once obtained a burly multi-untalented catcher named Harry Chiti for a player to be named later. After a half season of watching Chiti's non-performance, they named him the player-to-be-named later. In effect, trading him for himself, a great trick even for Casey Stengel's Mets.

With all the wild and wonderful history of trades, the best part of a trade can often be the least known. Most clubs trade big name for big name (batting champion Harvey Kuenn for home run champion Rocky Colavito) or small name for small name, just to fill a need. This guy needs a backup infielder and that guy needs a third string catcher.

The throw-in is the guy who comes along to carry the money, entertain the teammate he is moving with or pitch some March batting practice. Once in a while a team gets lucky.

Either by good luck, or as Branch Rickey would say, the residue of design, the Mets struck gold last November 2 when they obtained the lefthanded services of one George Heard Stone, Jr.

Very few people had ever heard about Heard when the deal was made. He came to the Mets with a heavy label to carry: Throw-in.

Stone, a 27-year-old from Ruston, Louisiana, had been an in and out performer with the Atlanta Braves for six seasons after signing with them out of Louisiana Tech in his home town.

He had won 13 games for the division-winning 1969 Braves. He had even pitched the game that put them in first place and homered. Then he won two games down the stretch, including the pennant clincher for the Braves.

He managed one relief appearance in the playoffs (against the Mets) in the last losing game for the Braves.

He was 11-11, 6-8 and 6-11 in the next three years. His career seemed headed to oblivion. Then came the big throw-in.

The Mets needed a second baseman. General Manager Bob Scheffing gambled in a deal for Felix Millan, the good-hit, good-field Atlanta second baseman. He gave Gary Gentry, always a potentially fine pitcher, and Danny Frisella, the best right-handed relief pitcher on the team, for Millan.

Oh, yes, Scheffing told Atlanta's GM, Eddie Robinson, how about throwing in that Stone?

When the deal was made the Mets were elated. They had obtained a solid professional in Millan for players they believed they could replace. They might also have something in Stone.

Manager Yogi Berra thought Stone could be a winner for the Mets. "Rube (Walker) and I like him," Berra said. "We think he has a kink in his motion. If we can straighten him out he could be a winner for us."

Stone pitched reasonably well for the Mets this spring. But it was merely spring training. There were more important pitchers to get ready for the season. Stone pitched in "B" games, got an inning here and there in "A" games, was challenged by some bright young pitchers, and hung on to wind up as the extra wheel on the starting staff.

"I'll be ready when they need me," he said.

This was a rare bird. He did not complain or whine about his lack of work. He did not quit running, quit throwing, give up mentally on himself or his team.

Continued on 49

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YOGI'S LIEUTENANTS

JOE PIGNATANO:
Bullpen Coach

Superintendent of bullpen corps made it to majors in own home town (Brooklyn); high school coach had written letter of commendation to Dodgers, who invited him to tryout session and then signed him to Cairo (Kitty League) contract for final weeks of 1948 season . . . Brought up to Brooklyn in 1957, he subsequently accompanied Dodgers to Los Angeles; was sold to Kansas City in 1961; traded to Giants for Jose Tartabull winter of 1961; purchased by Mets July of 1962 . . . Closed major league career by hitting into triple play in Chicago on last time at bat in final game of 1962 . . . Ended playing career at Rochester in 1964, and joined Gil Hodges as coach in Washington after Danny O'Connell and Hobie Landrith resigned.

First lieutenant under Gil Hodges in Washington and at Shea retained that status under Yogi Berra when latter was appointed manager following sudden passing of Hodges, April 2, 1972, in West Palm Beach . . . Credited with developing World Series pitching staff of Seaver, Koosman, Gentry, Ryan, McGraw and McAndrew . . . Broke into majors with Cubs in 1948; traded with Johnny Schmitz, Wayne Terwilliger and Andy Pafko to Dodgers for Joe Hatten, Bruce Edwards, Eddie Miksis and Gene Hermanski on June 15, 1951 . . . Played with Dodgers until middle of 1958, when Walt Alston appointed him coach; following two years was playing-manager in minors at Houston and Atlanta, after which hung up glove and continued managing through 1964 . . . As player in 1946 led Three-Eye League in batting (.354) and fielding (.979); was second in Southern Association home runs (22) next season, and on May 21, 1952, tied N.L. record by getting two hits and scoring twice in one inning . . . Late younger brother Verlon was Chicago Cub coach.

RUBE WALKER:
Pitching Coach

EDDIE YOST:
Third Base Coach

Product of local sandlots jumped from NYU campus to Major Leagues in Washington infield in 1944 for distinguished 17-year active career which closed with the then Los Angeles Angels in 1962; returned to Washington as coach following season . . . Senators traded him, Rocky Bridges and Neil Chrisley to Detroit for Reno Bertoia, Ron Samford and Jim Delsing, Dec. of 1958; selected by Angels in American League expansion draft of Dec., 1961 . . . Held major league record for most games at third base (2008) and No. 1 among A.L. third basemen in putouts (2356), assists (3659) and chances (6015) when career ended; led league in bases on balls six times . . . Selected but did not play in 1952 All-Star game . . Holds NYU Master's Degree in phys ed.

After three-year coaching tenure with Milwaukee Brewers, popular ex-Met shortstop returns to Shea as replacement for Sheriff Robinson, who had been brought in from special assignment role as emergency measure when Yogi Berra moved up as manager following abrupt passing of Gil Hodges last Spring . . . Rated with elite of NL shortstops, taciturn Texan's brilliant 16-year playing career came to end after two unusual mishaps within one-week 1966 span: right shoulder injured trying to check swing Aug. 3 against Giants, and re-injured Aug. 11 when fan bumped him as he was en route to clubhouse at end of game in Pittsburgh; underwent surgery Sept. 15, subsequently was unconditionally released and reported to spring training as free agent; forced into voluntary retirement after dislocating troublesome shoulder making routine throw to first base in West Palm Beach exhibition game against Braves . . . Remained in Mets' organization as farm system instructor in 1967; managed Visalia in 1968 and again at outset of 1969 before being transferred to helm at Memphis, where won divisional title and playoffs. . . . Mets had acquired him from Braves May 8, 1964, for Jay Hook and unspecified amount of money.

ROY McMILLAN:
First Base Coach

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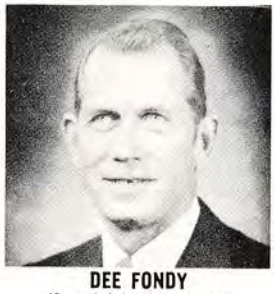

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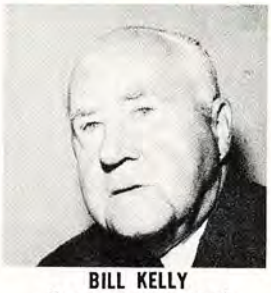

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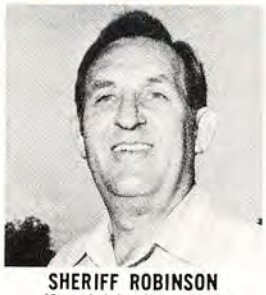

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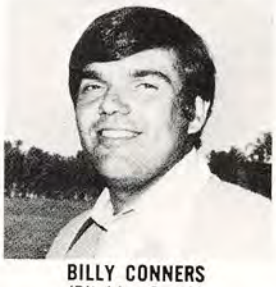

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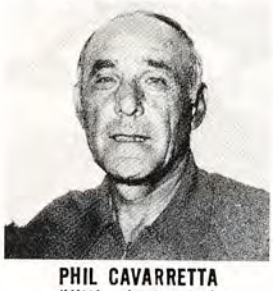

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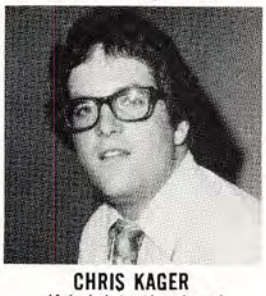

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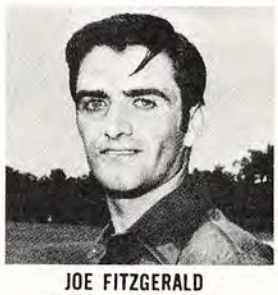

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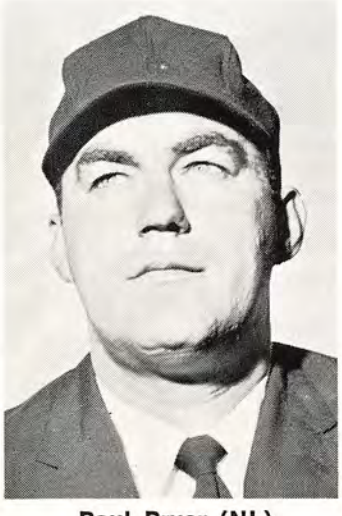

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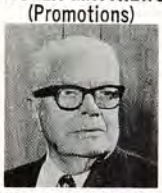
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1973 NEW YORK METS ROSTER

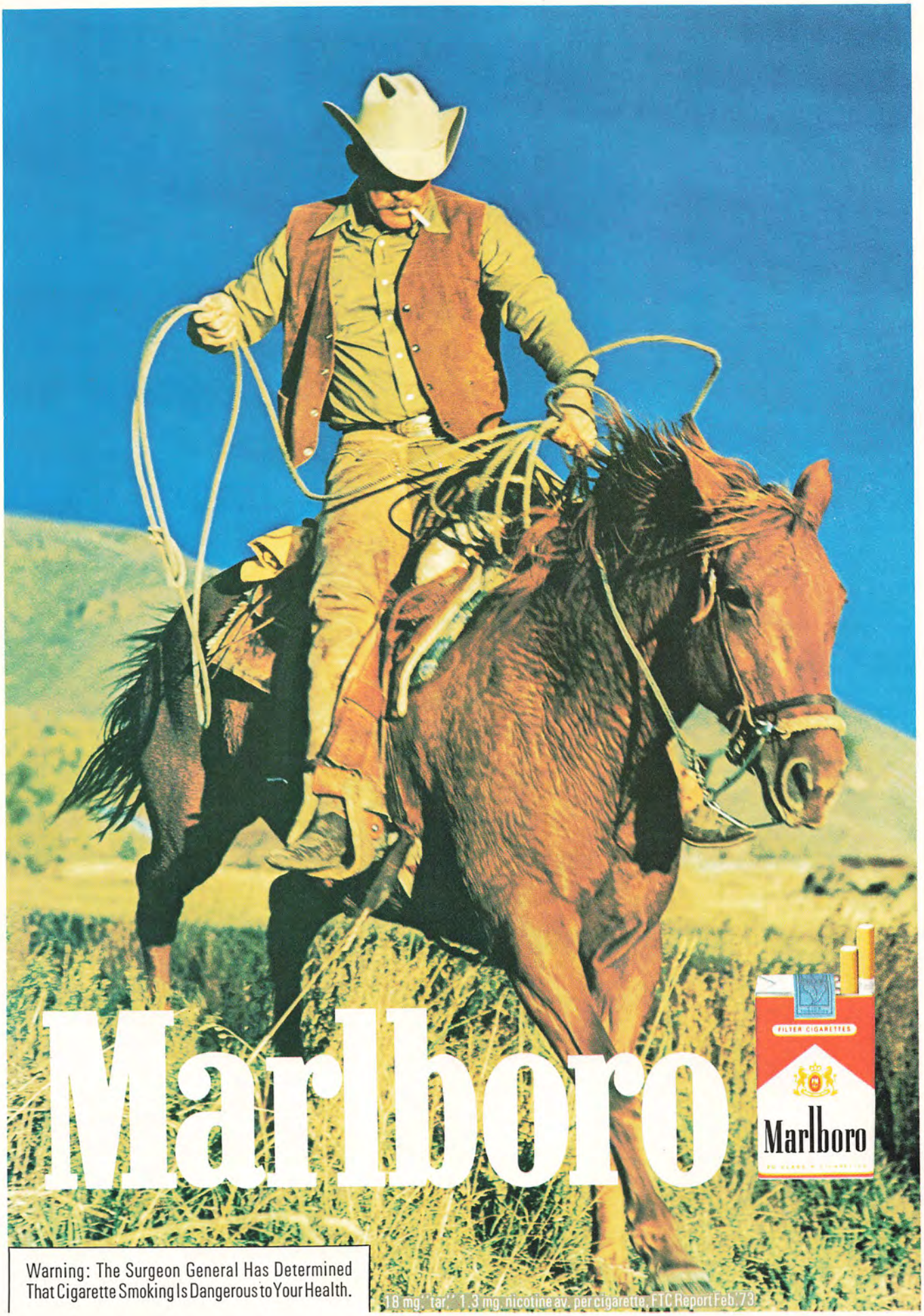
MANAGER: Yogi Berra (8) **TEAM PHYSICIAN:** Dr. Peter LaMotte
COACHES: Roy McMillan (51); Joe Pignatano (52); Rube Walker (54); Eddie Yost (53) **TRAINERS:** Tom McKenna, Joe Deer

NO.	PITCHERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	1973 CLUB	W-L	ERA
38	Capra, Buzz	R	R	5-10	168	10/ 1/47 Chicago, Ill.	Tidewater METS	4-5 2-7	3.71 3.86
36	Koosman, Jerry	R	L	6-2	208	12/23/43 Appleton, Minn.	METS	14-15	2.84
32	Matlack, Jon	L	L	6-3	205	1/19/50 West Chester, Pa.	METS	14-16	3.20
43	McAndrew, Jim	R	R	6-2	185	1/11/44 Lost Nation, Ia.	METS	3-8	5.40
45	McGraw, Tug	R	L	6-0	185	8/30/44 Martinez, Cal.	METS	5-6	3.86
31	Parker, Harry	R	R	6-3	190	9/14/47 Highland, Ill.	METS	8-4	3.38
33	Sadecki, Ray	L	L	5-11	194	12/26/40 Kansas City, Kan.	METS	5-4	3.38
41	Seaver, Tom	R	R	6-1	206	11/17/44 Fresno, Cal.	METS	19-10	2.08
40	Stone, George	L	L	6-3	195	7/ 9/46 Ruston, La.	METS	12-3	2.80

NO.	CATCHERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	1973 CLUB	HR	RBI	AVG.
10	Dyer, Duffy	R	R	6-0	195	8/15/45 Dayton, O.	METS	1	9	.185
15	Grote, Jerry	R	R	5-11	190	10/ 6/42 San Antonio, Tex.	METS	1	32	.256
42	Hodges, Ron	L	R	6-1	185	6/22/49 Franklin, Co., Va.	Memphis METS	1 1	11 18	.170 .260

NO.	INFIELDERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	1973 CLUB	HR	RBI	AVG.
5	Beauchamp, Jim	R	R	6-2	205	8/21/39 Vinita, Okla.	METS	0	14	.279
12	Boswell, Ken	L	R	6-0	172	2/23/46 Austin, Tex.	METS	2	14	.227
11	Garrett, Wayne	L	R	5-11	183	12/ 3/47 Brooksville, Fla.	METS	16	58	.258
3	Harrelson, Bud	SW	R	5-11	150	6/ 6/44 Niles, Cal.	METS	0	20	.258
7	Kranepool, Ed	L	L	6-3	210	11/ 8/44 Bronx, N. Y.	METS	1	35	.239
17	Martinez, Teddy	R	R	6-0	165	12/10/47 Cen. Barahona, D. R.	METS	1	14	.255
16	Millan, Felix	R	R	5-11	172	8/21/43 Yabucoa, P. R.	METS	3	37	.290
28	Milner, John	L	L	6-0	185	12/28/49 Atlanta, Ga.	METS	23	72	.239

NO.	OUTFIELDERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	1973 CLUB	HR	RBI	AVG.
25	Hahn, Don	R	R	6-1	185	11/16/48 San Francisco, Cal.	Tidewater METS	7 2	27 21	.274 .229
21	Jones, Cleon	R	L	6-0	198	8/ 4/42 Plateau, Ala.	METS	11	48	.260
24	Mays, Willie	R	R	5-11	180	5/ 6/31 Westfield, Ala.	METS	6	25	.211
4	Staub, Rusty	L	R	6-2	200	4/ 1/44 New Orleans, La.	METS	15	76	.279
9	Theodore, George	R	R	6-4	190	11/13/47 Salt Lake City, Utah	METS	1	15	.259



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UMPIRES—Augie Donatelli (NL); Russ Goetz (AL); Jerry Neudecker (A

1 GREEN, Dick (INF)
2 MANGUAL, Angel (OF)
4 NORTH, Bill (OF)
6 BANDO, Sal (INF)
7 JOHNSON, Deron (INF)
9 JACKSON, Reggie (OF)
10 FOSSE, Ray (C)
11 KUBIAK, Ted (INF)
13 ODOM, John (P)
14 BLUE, Vida (P)
16 CONIGLIARO, Billy (OF)
17 ANDREWS, Mike (INF)
18 TENACE, Gene (INF)
19 CAMPANERIS, Bert (INF)
22 ALOU, Jesus (OF)
23 WILLIAMS, Dick (Mgr.)
24 LEWIS, Allan (OF)
25 LINDBLAD, Paul (P)
26 RUDI, Joe (OF)
27 HUNTER, Jim (P)
28 PINA, Horacio (P)
30 HOLTZMAN, Ken (P)
32 KNOWLES, Darold (P)
34 FINGERS, Rollie (P)
37 DAVALILLO, Vic (OF)
38 BOURQUE, Pat (INF)
41 ADAIR, Jerry (Coach)
42 STOCK, Wes (Coach)
43 NOREN, Irv (Coach)
44 HOSCHEIT, Vern (Coach)

OAKLAND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	AB	R	H	RBI	PO	A	E
										10	11	12	13	14	15	16

If our Mets are a bunch of runs behind in the ninth...

"Don't give up the ship!"

); Paul Pryor (NL); Marty Springstead (AL); Harry Wendelstedt (NL)

3 HARRELSON, Bud (INF)
4 STAUB, Rusty (OF)
5 BEAUCHAMP, Jim (INF)
7 KRANEPOOL, Ed (INF)
8 BERRA, Yogi (Mgr.)
9 THEODORE, George (OF)
10 DYER, Duffy (C)
11 GARRETT, Wayne (INF)
12 BOSWELL, Ken (INF)
15 GROTE, Jerry (C)
16 MILLAN, Felix (INF)
17 MARTINEZ, Teddy (INF)
21 JONES, Cleon (OF)
24 MAYS, Willie (OF)
25 HAHN, Don (OF)
28 MILNER, John (INF)
31 PARKER, Harry (P)
32 MATLACK, Jon (P)
33 SADECKI, Ray (P)
36 KOOSMAN, Jerry (P)
38 CAPRA, Buzz (P)
40 STONE, George (P)
41 SEAVER, Tom (P)
42 HODGES, Ron (C)
43 McANDREW, Jim (P)
45 McGRAW, Tug (P)
51 McMILLAN, Roy (Coach)
52 PIGNATANO, Joe (Coach)
53 YOST, Eddie (Coach)
54 WALKER, Rube (Coach)

METS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	AB 10	R 11	H 12	RBI 13	PO 14	A 15	E 16

"Somebody still cares about quality."

1973 AMERICAN LEAGUE CHAMPION A'S

FRONT ROW (Left to Right): Reggie Jackson, Catfish Hunter, Pat Bourque, batboy Ron Pieraldi, Dick Green, Vic Davalillo, Bill North. **SECOND ROW:** Bert Campaneris, Vida Blue, Paul Lindblad, coach Jerry Adair, coach Vern Hoscheit, Manager Dick Williams, coach Irv Noren, coach Wes Stock, Sal Bando, Gene Tenace. **THIRD ROW:** Trainer Joe Romo, Traveling Sec. Jim Bank, Angel Mangual, Jesus Alou, Joe Rudi, John Odom, Mike Andrews, Ted Kubiak, Equip Mrg. Frank Cienscyzk. **BACK ROW:** Horacio Pina, Ken Holtzman, Deron Johnson, Rollie Fingers, Billy Conigliaro, Ray Fosse, Darold Knowles, Jose Morales (since sold to Montreal).

1973 OAKLAND A'S ROSTER

MANAGER: Dick Williams (23)
COACHES: Jerry Adair (41); Vern Hoscheit (44); Irv Noren (43); Wes Stock (42)

TEAM PHYSICIANS: Dr. Harry Walker, Dr. Charles Hudson
TRAINER: Joe Romo

NO.	PITCHERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	(1973 OAKLAND STATISTICS) W-L	ERA
14	Blue, Vida	SW	L	6-0	186	6/28/49 Mansfield, La.	20-9	3.28
34	Fingers, Rollie	R	R	6-4	180	8/25/46 Steubenville, O.	7-8	1.92
30	Holtzman, Ken	R	L	6-2	175	11/ 3/45 St. Louis, Mo.	21-13	2.97
27	Hunter, Jim	R	R	6-0	192	4/ 8/46 Hertford, N. C.	21-5	3.34
32	Knowles, Darold	L	L	6-0	190	12/ 9/41 Brunswick, Mo.	6-8	3.09
25	Lindblad, Paul	L	L	6-1	195	8/ 9/41 Chanute, Kan.	1-5	3.69
13	Odom, John	R	R	6-0	185	5/29/45 Macon, Ga.	5-12	4.49
28	Pina, Horacio	R	R	6-3	177	3/12/45 Coahuila, Mex.	6-3	2.76

NO.	CATCHER	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	HR	RBI	AVG.
10	Fosse, Ray	R	R	6-2	210	4/ 4/47 Marion, Ill.	7	52	.256

NO.	INFIELDERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	HR	RBI	AVG.
17	Andrews, Mike	R	R	6-3	195	7/ 9/43 Los Angeles, Cal.	0	10	.200
6	Bando, Sal	R	R	6-0	195	2/13/44 Cleveland, O.	29	97	.288
38	Bourque, Pat	L	L	6-0	210	3/23/47 Worcester, Mass.	2	9	.190
19	Campaneris, Bert	R	R	5-11	155	3/ 9/42 Pueblo Nuevo, Cuba	4	46	.250
1	Green, Dick	R	R	5-10	180	4/21/41 Sioux City, Ia.	3	42	.260
7	Johnson, Deron	R	R	6-2	209	7/17/38 San Diego, Cal.	19	81	.246
11	Kubiak, Ted	SW	R	6-0	175	5/12/42 New Brunswick, N. J.	3	17	.220
18	Tenace, Gene	R	R	6-0	190	10/10/46 Russelton, Pa.	24	84	.258

NO.	OUTFIELDERS	B	T	HT.	WT.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	HR	RBI	AVG.
22	Alou, Jesus	R	R	6-2	195	3/24/43 Haina, D. R.	1	11	.306
16	Conigliaro, Billy	R	R	6-0	190	9/15/47 Revere, Mass.	0	14	.200
37	Davalillo, Vic	L	L	5-7	157	7/31/39 Cabimas, Ven.	0	4	.188
9	Jackson, Reggie	L	L	6-0	195	5/18/46 Wyncote, Pa.	32	117	.293
24	Lewis, Allan	SW	R	6-0	175	11/12/41 Colon, Panama	0	0	.000
2	Mangual, Angel	R	R	5-10	178	3/19/47 Ponce, P. R.	3	13	.224
4	North, Bill	SW	R	5-11	185	5/15/48 Seattle, Wash.	5	34	.285
26	Rudi, Joe	R	R	6-2	200	9/ 7/46 Modesto, Cal.	12	66	.270

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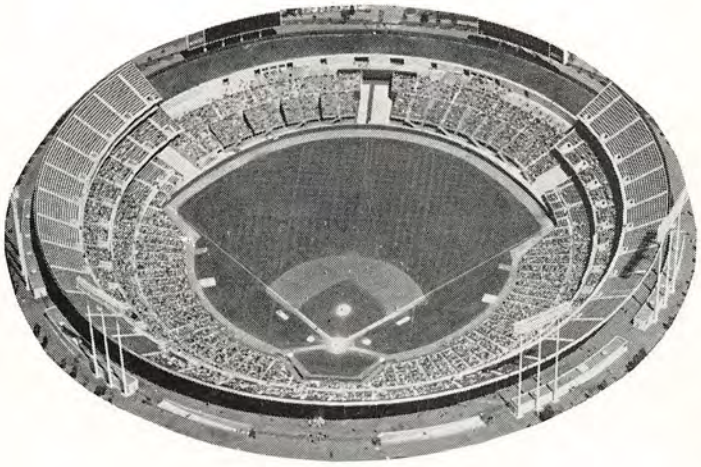

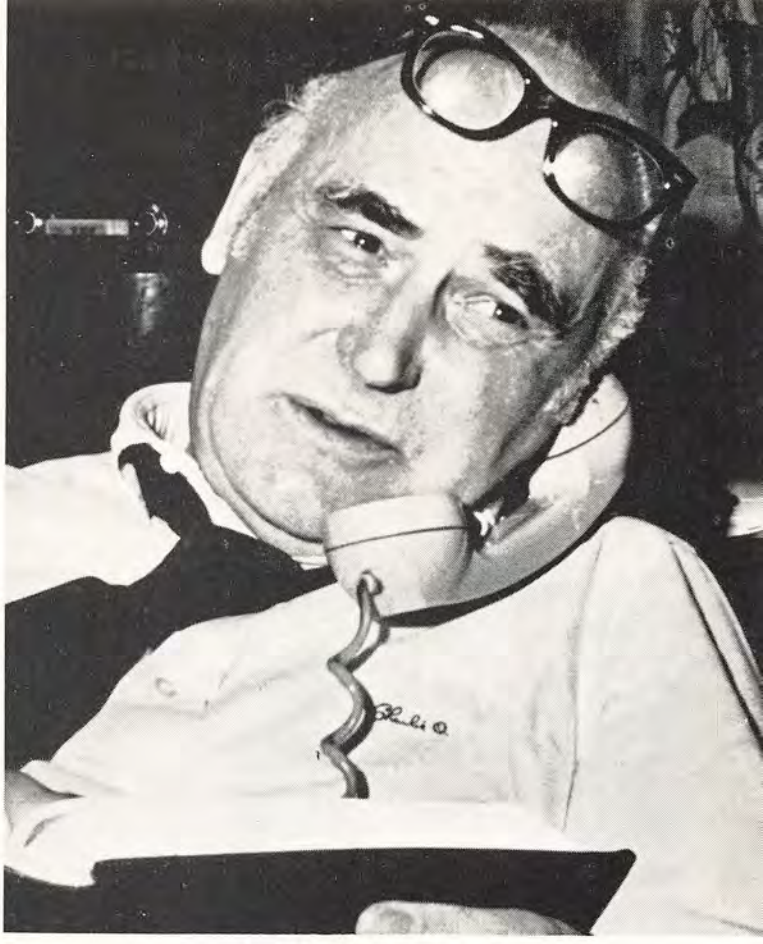

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President

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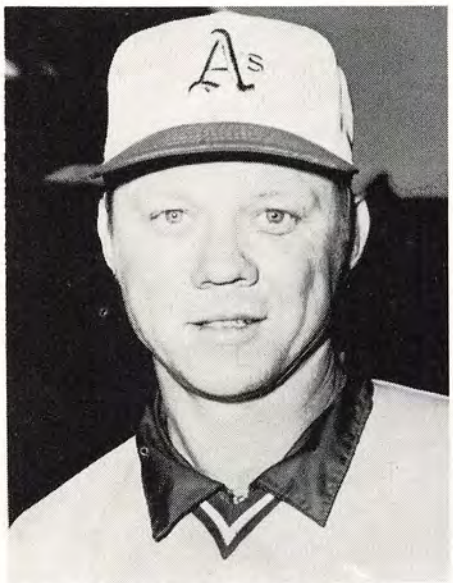
Dir. Scouting & Minor Leagues

ROBERT FULTON
Dir. Public Relations

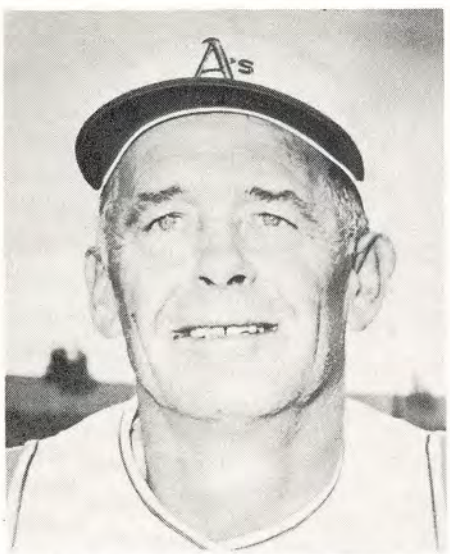
JIM BANK
Traveling Secretary

IN THE A'S DUGOUT

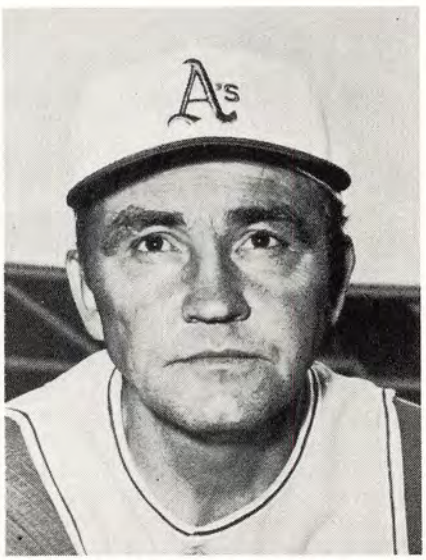
MANAGER DICK WILLIAMS



COACH JERRY ADAIR



COACH VERN HOSCHEIT



COACH IRV NOREN

COACH WES STOCK

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JACKSON HTS.
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Cub rookie of 1941.

Philly nabbed at home.

Growling 1961 Tiger manager.

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1949: Scheffing vs. Jackie Robinson.

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TOM SEAVER

Tom Seaver (41) justifies his reputation as "baseball's premier pitcher" if consistency is the yardstick which determines the singular honor. He goes into the World Series with both the strikeout and ERA championships in his pocket for the third time in his spectacular career. He had previously accomplished the rare "double" in back-to-back efforts in 1970 and '71. During the current campaign his contributions included five route-going triumphs against the Pirates and a sixth consecutive season of 200 or more strikeouts. As an All Star selection he's letter perfect with 7-for-7. Over the years his trophy case has been endowed with numerous awards, among them: NL Rookie-of-the-Year (the first time in history it was won by a member of a last place team); Cy Young, Hickock and Sporting News Major League Man of the Year.

Wayne Garrett (11) came into his own in 1973 and probably once and for all resolved the Mets' sensitive third base problem. He established career highs in doubles, homers and RBI. His flaming bat matched the color of his hair during the pulsating September flag run. The Huckleberry Finnish Floridian shuttled between regular hot corner duty and emergency service at second and short in the process of achieving 1973 stardom. A rookie on the 1969 "Miracle" team, he batted .385 in the Championship Series—his two-run homer in the third game of the Atlanta sweep erecting a lead the Mets never relinquished.

WAYNE GARRETT

JERRY GROTE

Jerry Grote (15), the rifle-armed receiver who "plays hurt more than anyone in baseball," is given a lion's share of the credit for the sharp turnabout in the Shea pitching corps during the remarkable run to the NL East title. He made two dramatic comebacks: (1) from off-season elbow surgery (2) from the disabling effects of a right arm fractured by a stray Ramon Hernandez pitch on May 12 that sidelined him for two months. In addition to anchoring what had been a drifting mound staff, he sparkled offensively in the closing drive. His game-winning RBI Sept 21 against Pittsburgh put the Mets in first place for the first time since April 29. His seasonal highlights included a career first grand slam—off San Diego's Steve Arlin, Aug. 15.

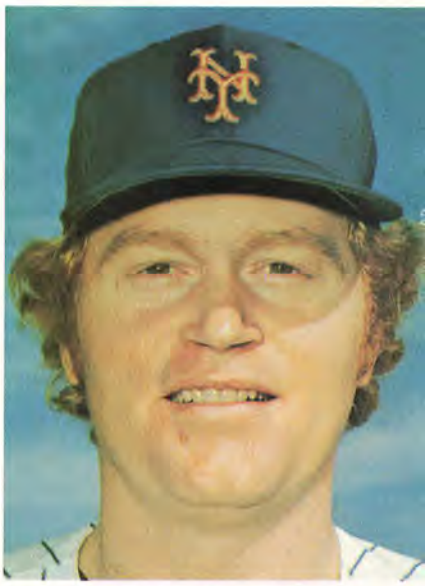
John Milner (28) has solidified his ranking as one of the finest power hitter developed in the Mets' organization. For the second straight year he has captured the clubs home run championship, this time easily surpassing his rookie total of 17. He was riding the crest of a sensational getaway with five homers, 13 RBI and a .327 batting average after 16 games, when a pulled hamstring in the Astrodome, April 25, put him on the disabled list. The Hammer missed 23 starting appearances and never fully recovered his fine edge.

JOHN MILNER

Willie Mays (24) is going out like he came in—as a World Series player. And that says it all for the 42-year-old living legend who made it to the classic as a rookie with the 1951 Giants and makes the current world championship his valedictory. He leaves behind a list of accomplishments that reduce the record books to something of a private diary. A few of the entries include: No. 3 ranking in home run history; two MVP Awards; four NL home run crowns and as many for base-stealing; five slugging titles; a batting championship; the 6000-plus plateau in total bases, and seventh place on the all-time Hit Parade . . . Time and a pain-wracked body did what nobody in baseball could do: beat him. But not before he "came home" to New York, where he will always be a winner, and where the dramatic Sept. 25 Shea salute to him was one of the most emotional and inspiring salutes in sports history.

WILLIE MAYS

Rusty Staub (4) despaired over hand injuries for a second straight season after earning a reputaiton for durability in his eight campaigns with Houston and Montreal prior to his headlined acquisition by the Mets. However, in mid-August he finally shook off the painful effects of bruised knuckles suffered May 12 when he was struck by a Ramon Hernandez pitch in Pittsburgh. Thereafter he gradually approached his menacing form, as the Met guns of August laid down the pennant-winning barrage in the battle to the wire. His season contributions included a club record for doubles (on Sept. 7 he surpassed Tommy Davis' 1967 mark of 32) and attainment of the 1500-hit milestone five days earlier. He was obtained from Montreal on the eve of the 1972 campaign.



RUSTY STAUB

FELIX MILLAN

Felix Millan (16) is the first half of what is regarded as the best trade ever made by the Mets after the popular Puerto Rican was obtained with George Stone from Atlanta for Gary Gentry and Danny Frisella last winter. He promptly established himself as the most professional second baseman in Shea history. His proficient offensive production included a club-high 18-game hitting streak (on the heels of a 13-game skein). On Aug. 3 he tapped the Cardinals' Diego Segui for the 1000th major league hit of career, and is in in possession of a Met mark for singles in one season. A three-time All Star with the Braves, "The Cat" batted .333 against the Mets in the 1969 Championship Series.

Bud Harrelson (3) endured two disabling injuries in '73 (broken left hand June 4, and fractured sternum July 31) and it's significant that his return—on Aug. 18—from the second mishap, coincided with the Mets' amazing run from last to first. The infield acquired stability as he teamed with Felix Millan for the most professional double play combination in Met history, while the ERA's of the pitching beneficiaries dropped sharply. The frail Pacific product was once again the take charge agent of 1970-71 All Star form. His career accomplishments include a 1970 streak of 54 errorless games, tying the major league record for shortstops.

BUD HARRELSON

KEN BOSWELL

Ken Boswell (12) operated primarily as a pinch-hitter and part-time third baseman in 1973 after being utilized at second base almost exclusively since joining the Mets late in 1967. The popular Texan was one of the major contributors to the 1969 Eastern Division title, en route to "Miracle No. 1," with a .407 average from Aug. 23 to the season's close. In the '69 Championship Series against the Braves his .333 stickwork included two homers and five RBI and he was 1-for-3 in his only World Series appearance. Among his exploits is the major league record for consecutive errorless games by a second baseman, an 85-game string in 1970.

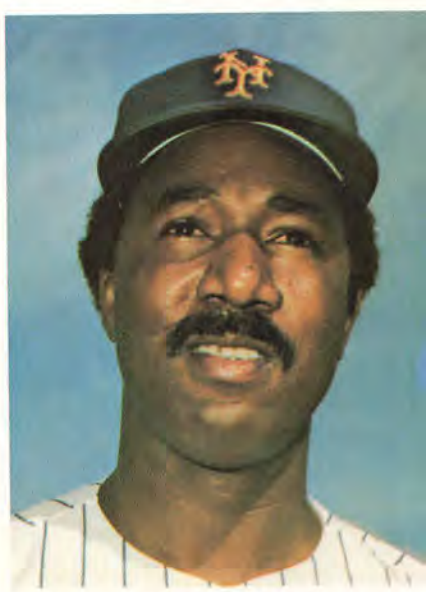
Jerry Koosman (36) made it all the way back this season in a manner reminiscent of his vital contributions to the 1969 "Miracle." The carefree Minnesota product who finally conquered a shoulder infirmity that plagued him for three years, was A-1 from Day One. His exploits included a club record of 31⅔ consecutive scoreless innings over a triumphant four-game stretch from Aug. 19 to Sept. 3. He preserved his first shutout (1-0) of the year with a game-ending pop-up of Henry Aaron, April 29, and authored another 1-0 job, in 10 innings, against the Giants Aug. 24. He was the dominant pitching factor in the "Miracle" World Series with two victories over the Orioles.

JERRY KOOSMAN

RAY SADECKI

Ray Sadecki (33) is the kind of hand—hired and left—to have around. A blithe spirit whose presence is valued on and off the field, he was a World Series competitor before many of the current Mets were in pro baseball. As a 20-game winner for the Cardinals in 1964 he was the starting and winning pitcher in the first game of the World Series against the Yankee crew managed by Yogi Berra. As usual, for the Mets he operates as a spot starter and reliever; in the latter role he turned in eight scoreless innings against the Pirates from the bullpen over a three-game September stretch. A 2-1 decision over the Dodgers, Aug. 21, was his first complete game since Sept. 13, 1971.

Cleon Jones (21) was the most impressive force in the Mets' stretch run. During the 7-game home stand that closed out the campaign he did it all—with four home runs, eleven RBI and a series of defensive plays that kept Shea in a constant uproar. After launching the season with two homers in a 3-0 inaugural triumph over Steve Carlton, he suffered a wrist injury April 19 that virtually sidelined him through July 8. Cleon became the first player to accumulate 1000 hits in a Met uniform on Aug. 2. His two circuits and five RBI keyed the 7-3 win over Pittsburgh on Sept. 19 which maintained the Met momentum and he furnished a fitting climax to "Willie Mays' Night" with a home run and spectacular game-saving catch in a 2-1 decision over Montreal. He achieved superstardom during the Met Miracle season of 1969, when his .340 average was third best in the NL.

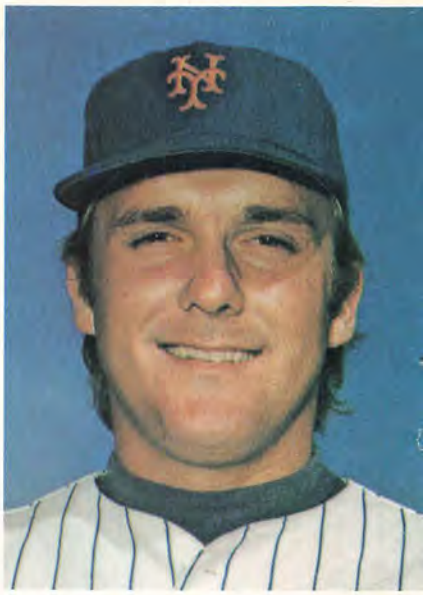


CLEON JONES

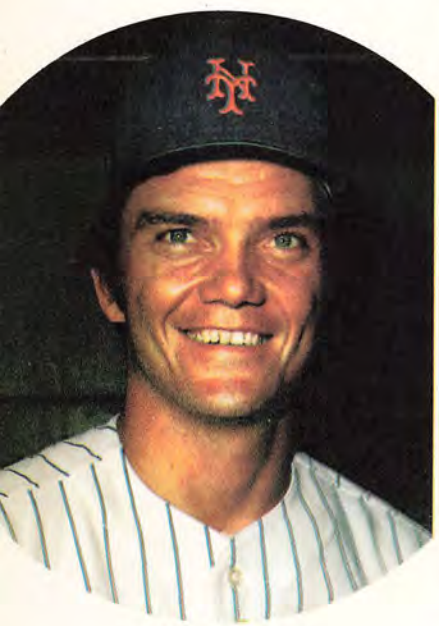
JON MATLACK

Jon Matlack (32) overcame adversity and the sophomore jinx to solidify his status as a ranking member of the NL's elite southpaw corps. Early season struggles were climaxed May 8 by the frightening spectre of tragedy when he was felled by a Marty Perez line drive that fractured his skull. But, astonishingly, 11 days later he hurled six shutout innings against the Pirates and took off on a comeback that mirrored his 1972 Rookie-of-the-Year form. He turned in the 10th one-hitter in Met history, July 10, against Houston, and the poised Pennsylvanian's 2-0 effort against St. Louis, Sept. 22, put the Shea troupe over the .500 mark for the first time in four months. His 1972 credentials were worthy of the league rookie award: 15 victories in 25 decisions and the circuit's fourth best ERA of 2.32.

Tug McGraw (45) "is the guy who turned the whole season around for us" in Yogi Berra's book. The sturdy southpaw regarded as baseball's No. 1 fireman on the basis of 1972 credentials which included 27 saves, a 1.70 ERA and the win in the All Star game, became baseball's No. 1 enigma during the first half of 1972. He was 0-6 with a 5.42 ERA in his first 41 appearances. But suddenly, and just as unaccountably, it all fell in place again in late August. He put together a 15-game performance marked by four wins and 11 saves! A perfect two-inning effort against the Dodgers Aug. 22 resulted in his first triumph since Oct. 2, 1972. In one stretch down to the wire he was unscored on in nine consecutive appearances, covering 18 innings. One of his prized accomplishments: the distinction of owning the first Met victory over Sandy Koufax, registered on Aug. 26, 1965.



TUG McGRAW

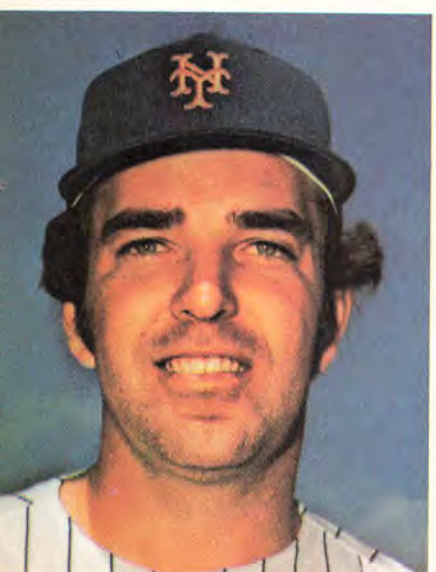


DUFFY DYER

Duffy Dyer (10) contributed one of the most important base-hits of the 1973 season to the Mets when he unloaded a ninth-inning two-out pinch double that tied the Pirates at 3-3, at Shea, Sept 20, and kept the Mets alive for a dramatic 13-inning triumph. He carried a considerabe portion of the catching burden during the first half of the compaign —particularly after Jerry Grote was sidelined with a fractured arm. The soft-spoken Arizonian enjoyed his most productive season in 1972, when his 36 RBI were embellished by eight homers, three triples and 17 doubles. No other Met catcher has accumulated eight HR's in one year.

Jim McAndrew (43) has been used sparingly this year, but one of his appearances resulted in a notable victory; a May 13 decision that represented the end of a three-game sweep of the Pirates. The veteran righthander also protected the win for George Stone in the 19-inning marathon against the Dodgers May 24. His productivity reached a peak last year, when he won 11 games and compiled a tidy 2.80 ERA.

JIM McANDREW



ED KRANEPOOL

Ed Kranepool (7) played in four games for the Mets as a 17-year-old kid out of James Monroe High School at the end of 1962 and has since achieved distinction as the only man who has participated in at least part of every season of the club's history. The Bronxite hung out career highs in batting (.280) and RBI (58) in 1971, but turned in his peak home run output in 1966 with 16 circuits. He was the Mets' All Star representative the previous year. His activity in the 1969 World Series was limited to one game and he made the most of it with a homer off Dave Leonhard. He has been utilized in the outfield and at first base this year and was a factor in the early season success of the Mets.

Jim Beauchamp (5) is characteristic of the reliable, if unpublicized, Met bench strength in his role as a right-handed pinch-hitter and utility agent the past two seasons. He was acquired from the Cardinals with pitchers Chuck Taylor and Harry Parker and infielder Tom Coulter for pitchers Rich Folkers, Charlie Hudson and Jim Bibby and outfielder Art Shamsky in October of 1971. Signed originally by the St. Louis organization in 1958, he suffered a series of shoulder operations which blocked the road to predicted stardom; however, along the way he managed to make valuable contributions to Houston, Atlanta and Cincinnati.

JIM BEAUCHAMP

TED MARTINEZ

Teddy Martinez (17) is a synonym for "Mr. Versatility." Last season the Dominican played second, third and short as well as all three outfield stations, while this year he operated at all those positions again, with the exception of right field. His first-ever Shea homer was recorded on Labor Day against the Phillies in the first game of a twin bill; and there were some spooky overtones. Because he got four hits in the game, which was his figure in the opener of a June 27 bill with the same Phils. Early in the season he abandoned a switch-hitting experiment initiated in the Florida Instructional League.

GEORGE STONE

George Stone (40) is part of the most rewarding trade in Met history: the deal last winter that brough him from Atlanta to New York with Felix Millan for Gary Gentry and Danny Frisella. After a two-month period of relative obscurity, "Stoney" moved into the starting rotation in early June and achieved full-blown identity going into the last week of the season with a run of eight straight victories. His first Met triumph was a long time coming—at least on the night it was recorded, since it came to pass on a six-inning scoreless stint of the 19-inning epic against the Dodgers, May 24. As a 13-game winner for the Braves in 1969, he worked one inning of Championship Series against the Mets.

RON HODGES

Ron Hodges (42) represents a symbolic name in the drive toward Miracle No. 2. He was brought up from Memphis on June 6 after injuries depleted the catching corps. In his third major league game, and only a year-and-a-half in professional baseball behind him, he hit a game-winning home run in a 3-1 victory over San Diego. But he really earned his spurs during the roaring stretch run. On Sept. 18 his ninth-inning pinch single off Dave Giusti tied the score and kept the Mets alive en route to a spectacular 6-5 victory. Two nights later, with Giusti again the victim, his 13th inning single drove in the winning run in a 4-3 triumph.

BUZZ CAPRA

Buzz Capra (38) was called up from Tidewater on June 9 and used exclusively out of the bull pen. His first save of the season represented a four-inning hitless stint, June 27, against the Phillies; shortly after the game started he had flown in from Chicago and his father's funeral. His most notable contribution was a key save Sept. 18 in Pittsburgh, when he retired Manny Sanguillen with two out in the ninth inning; the Mets had come back from the brink of virtual elimination with a five-run rally in their half that forged a 6-4 lead. A 625th selection in the 1969 free agent draft, Capra was the International League ERA king at Tidewater in 1971 with a 2.19 figure.

DON HAHN

Don Hahn (25) played his way, after previous failures, into genuine "regular centerfielder" status following his recall from Tidewater June 9. In addition to his defensive heroics, he made many vital offensive contributions. His ninth-inning single in Pittsburgh, Sept. 18, drove in two runs to cap a five-run rally that virtually rescued the Mets from extinction in a 6-5 victory, that marked the first of four successive victories over the Bucs. He came to the Mets in an April, 1971, trade with Montreal for Ron Swoboda. His home run off Tom Bradley in San Francisco, Aug. 11, represented his first outside-the-park homer in the majors.

HARRY PARKER

Harry Parker (31) figured in a 1971 trade, but didn't make it to the Mets until this season. The soft-spoken righthander is likely to be around a long time now. He started out with a run of five consecutive wins in a starting role and then was forced into relief when the bull pen faltered. He responded with three straight saves on a nine-game road trip leading to the All Star game and found his niche as the club's No. 1 righthanded reliever. He had been part of the eight-man deal with the Cardinals, Oct. 18, 1971, and earned and opportunity with the Mets after an outstanding 1972 campaign at Tidewater glossed by five shutouts and the International League's second best ERA of 2.61.

A Classic Nose For World Series Nostalgia

BY KEN SMITH

IN HONOR OF NO. 14: Uniform of beloved late manager Gil Hodges is formally retired at Shea on Oldtimer's Day as Mrs. Joan Hodges accepts uniform from Bob Scheffing, with offsprings Gil, Jr., Irene, Cindy and Barbara looking on.

The last day of the 1951 season, the Giants beat the Braves in Boston and caught the late afternoon train to New York, not knowing if they were to knock off a belt of champagne as National League champions, or to take a vitamin pill for a playoff series against the Dodgers. Between New London and New Haven came the news that the Brooklyns had won in Philadelphia thanks to a star play by Jackie Robinson.

Before the week was out, Bobby Thomson had hit that home run in the playoff and the World Series was to open the next afternoon at Yankee Stadium. All the Giants had to do was get into their uniforms at the Polo Grounds and take a two minute bus ride across the Harlem to open the Series.

Thomson was getting into his togs when a young man at the door handed him a ball and said "Here it is, this is it." Excitedly, Bobby rushed the ball to clubhouse custodian Eddie Logan, beaming: "Here's the home run ball, give this fellow a ticket." The wise emperor of the locker room cooled off the author of the most famous home run thriller, by opening a truck and depositing the ball on the tray. There were sixteen others reposing there.

"This is the seventeenth that has been brought in here since last night," Logan explained. "All claim to be Thomson's home run ball. The funny part of it is, one of them may be the true one." And that is why Thomson's home run ball is not in the Hall of Fame.

The closing incident is freshest in the memory of that series. Sal Yvars, last up for the Giants, drilled a short liner. Rightfielder Hank Bauer caught it on one knee. Everybody steamed into the clubhouses. Herman Franks, Giants coach, slung his mitt against the wall and cursed: "They never would have done it without that . . ." Franks was referring to some crackerjack plays spun by Phil Rizzuto.

The postmaster of Evanston, Ill., was getting ready for some fishing on a dock in Sarasota, Fla., a few years ago, when words wafted out of the boathouse window ". . . twelfth inning, one out, score 3-3, Earl McNeely up . . . here's the pitch—grounder to third. Bad hop. It hit a pebble or something, there goes the winning run home. Washington wins 4-3"

It was an ironical lurch back into the past, for the listener. Thirty-five years ago, Fred Lindstrom, the New York Giants' third baseman, was about to seize a grounder by McNeely in the last game of the 1924 World Series, when the ball took a bad bounce off a pebble, for a base hit, permitting the winning run of the World Series to streak home.

Here was Lindstrom, by now an Illinois post master, about to board a fishing boat with two of his boys, when he had to be reminded of the disastrous bad hop, because a Florida radio station happened to be in the midst of a series of broadcasts re-living famous baseball events.

Among a group in Los Angeles about to enter the dining room for a party for John McGraw in 1932, someone observed: "It is a shame that people forget the old stars." A voice spoke up: "I wish they would." We turned to identify who would say a thing like that. It was Fred Snodgrass. No wonder.

Fred, was the Giants' centerfielder who muffed a fly in the 1912 World Series. Everybody thinks of it, every time Snodgrass' name is mentioned. It probably won the series for the Boston Red Sox. Snodgrass atoned several times by sending prospects to McGraw, long after the muffer of that fly retired. One of his last was Hank Leiber.

In the first series of them all, in 1903, Pittsburgh's Deacon Phillippe won three of the first four games against the Red Sox, only to have Cy Young and Bill Dineen pitch Boston to victory in the next four games. Thus, right from the start teams were encouraged not to give up when trailing three games to one. It is true that in that series the requirement was five victories; but had it been for four, the feat of the Red Sox would have been equally poignant. It wasn't until 1925 that a team came from a 3-1 deficit to win. This time Pittsburgh was the successful one. Five years ago the fans saw the Cardinals own a 3-1 margin, only to have Mike Lolich and Denny McLain come whizzing to the championship.

The Cardinals are World Series professionals. They got into it in 1926 with Rogers Hornsby managing and playing second base against the Yankees, who had won four flags in six years.

Grover Alexander striking out Tony Lazzeri is a legend. It happened in that 1926 first taste of the sweet stuff. They won again in 1928—the pennant, anyway. And in 1930 the Gashouse Gang won National League flags in 1930, 1931 and 1934. Pepper Martin ran roughshod.

The 1934 event was one of the first Series springing to mind when people start reliving the big ones. Micky Cochrane's Tigers, with Schoolboy Rowe, nationally known for having mentioned "How am I doing, Edna?" stood toe to toe with Joe Medwick, Leo Durocher, Martin, Rip Collins, Wild Bill Hallahan and Ernie Orsatti. It wound up with the Dean boys each winning two and Judge Landis banishing Medwick for sliding too hard into third base. The Detroit fans would not allow the game to go on with Medwick in it.

There was Mickey Owens' missed third strike in 1941. The Dodgers had the third game won with three out in the ninth. But the third strike got away from Owen and the Yankees on borrowed time, steamed up a rally. Dixie Walker, the "People's Choice" of Flatbush shook his head, muttering: "They are so lucky that they beat you even when they're behind with three out in the ninth."

And all that before the Mets came a 'hootin from arrears in 1969!

(NOTE: Ken Smith is the Director of the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum in Cooperstown, and for more than three decades was a baseball writer for the now defunct N.Y. Daily Mirror.)

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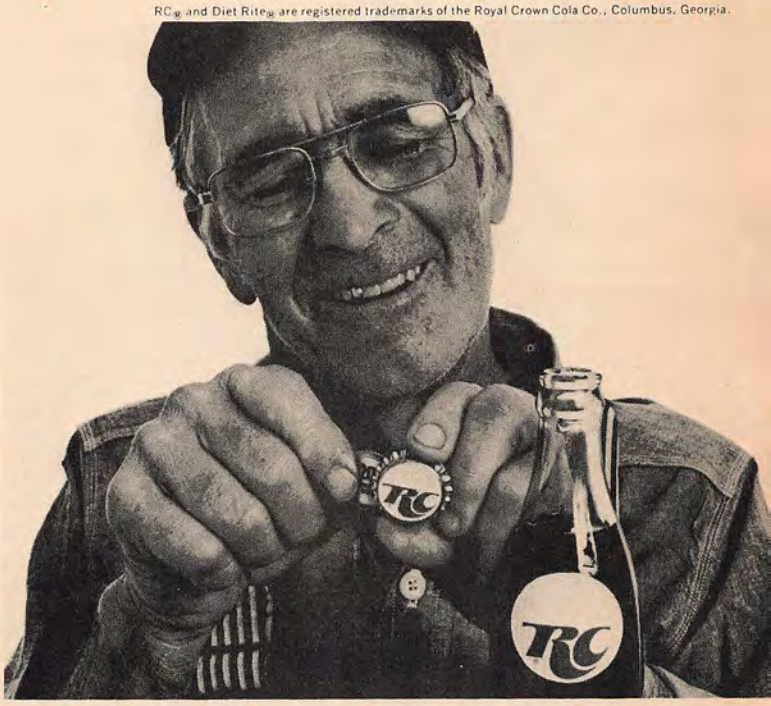

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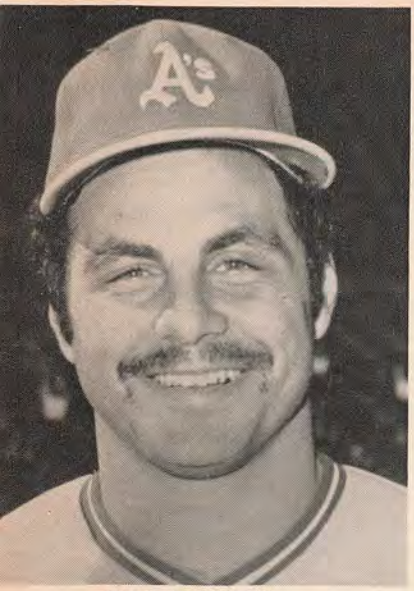
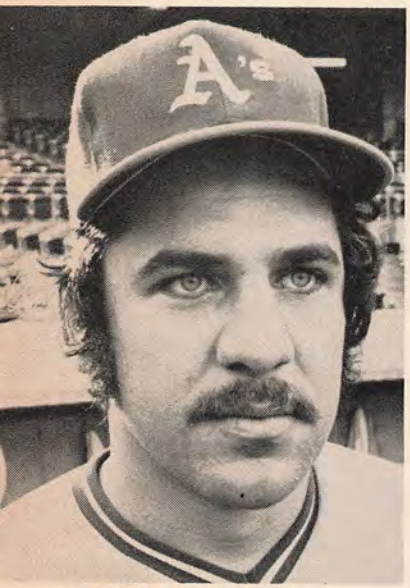
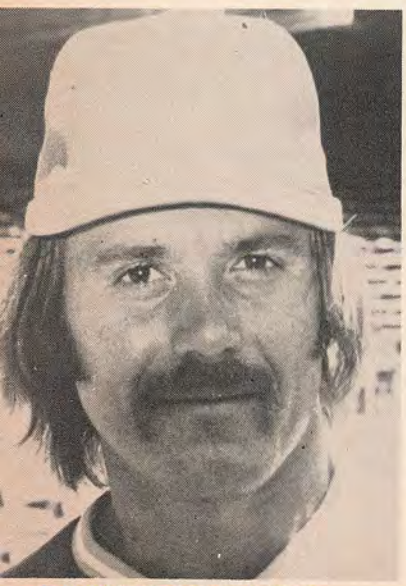


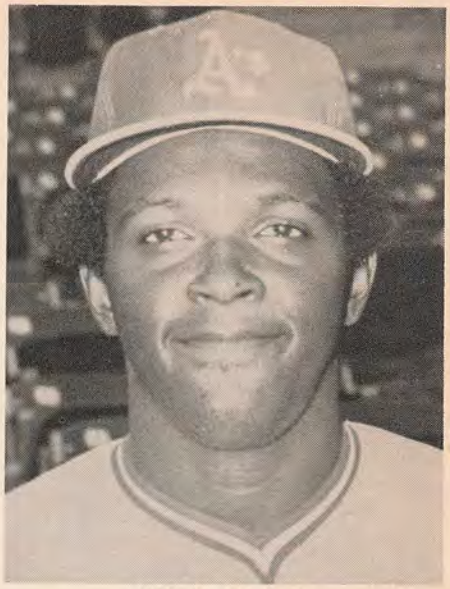
SAL BANDO



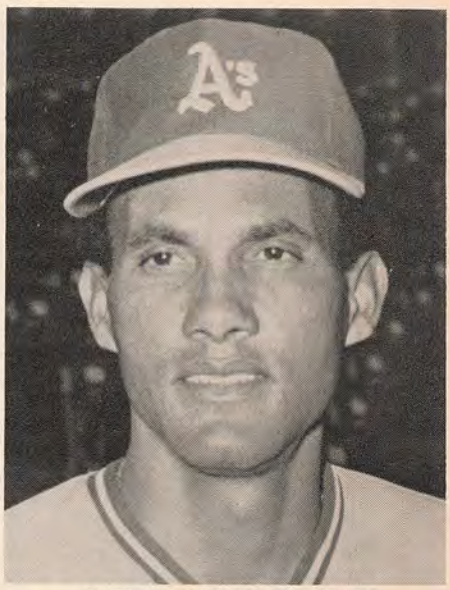
PAT BOURQUE



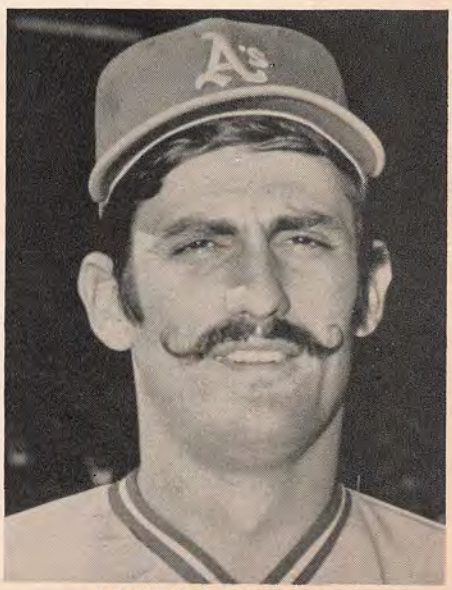
BILLY CONIGLIARO



VIDA BLUE



BERT CAMPANERIS



ROLLIE FINGERS

Sal Bando (6) had played in every game for the A's this season going into September and had driven in 69 runs while contributing 24 homers and 20 doubles to the Oakland attack to that juncture. He made his third appearance in the 1973 All-Star game in this his sixth major league season with the A's. He had his best campaign in 1969 when he drove in 113 runs and hit .281. Sal helped Arizona State win the College World Series title in 1965 as he hit .480, drove in nine runs and was voted the tournament's "Outstanding Player." His run-scoring double over Bobby Tolan's head in Game 7 of the 1972 World Series was probably the A's biggest hit all last season.

Vida Blue (14) has a 1973 record that doesn't parallel the 1971 ledger that enabled him to capture the Cy Young and American League MVP awards, but he has come close. A 20-game winner, his stats were bolstered by a five-game win string during August. After losing to Jim Bibby's Ranger no-hitter July 30, Vida beat the Yanks twice, Detroit twice and Boston once as the A's thrashed their way through the Eastern Division powers to move comfortably ahead of Kansas City by the end of August. The flame-throwing third-year southpaw then took dead aim at chalking up his second 20-game season.

Pat Bourque (38) was obtained Aug. 29 in a deal that sent Gonzalo Marquez to the Chicago Cubs. The exit of Marquez, last year's late-season and World Series pinch-hitting hero, raised some eyebrows. But the motive behind the transaction was simple: Bourque's power. The husky southpaw-swinging first sacker had seven homers in 57 games for the Cubs, who used him sparingly. Earlier this season he had clubbed nine homers and driven in 42 runs while hitting .347 at Wichita.

Bert Campaneris (19) is still considered the best shortstop in the American League, for whom he started in the 1973 All-Star game. He led the AL in stolen bases in 1965 (51), 1966 (52), 1967 (55), 1970 (42) and 1972 (52). Going into August he had swiped 27 bases, second however to teammate Bill North's league-leading 43. Always a tough out, Campy had drilled opposing pitchers for 132 hits with a month to go. Among his safeties were numerous key blows that either got him in scoring position (he had tallied 68 runs) or knocked in important runs (41 RBI).

Billy Conigliaro (16) came out of retirement to join the A's after an off-season conversation with Charles Finley. Unfortunately for Billy, an early season injury and subsequent knee surgery shelved the former Red Sox outfielder, who had been expected to be the A's starting outfielder. Fortunately for the A's, Billy was reactivated in time to replace the injured Joe Rudi in left field after Rudi was injured July 26.

Rollie Fingers (34) strolled to the mound Aug. 26, but not in relief. He went out to accept from the Northern California Fire Prevention Bureau a fireman's helmet. For the second season in a row he had been determined the winner of the prized award for having been the A's top relief pitcher. Going into September, Rollie had registered 17 saves and raised his record to 6-6 after being 0-5 in June. Fingers became a household name during the 1972 World Series when he appeared in six games, tying a major league record.

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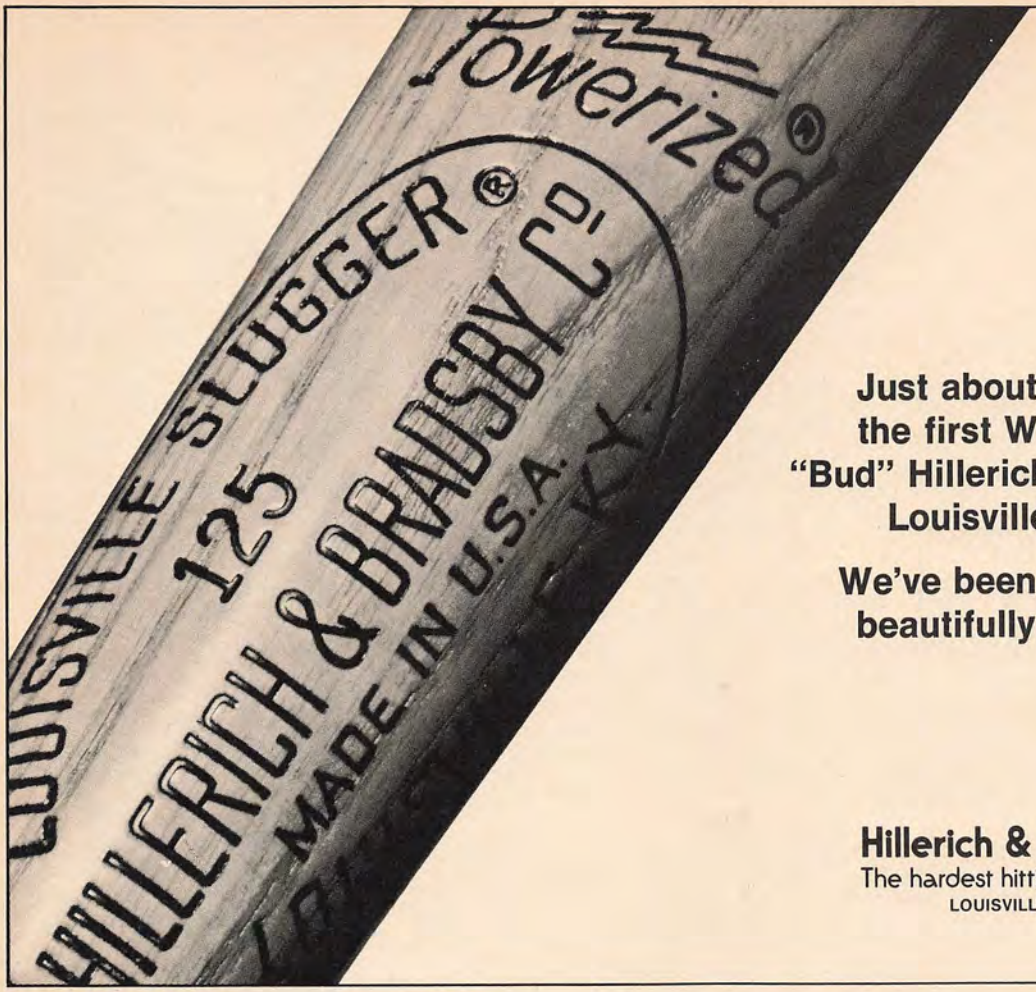

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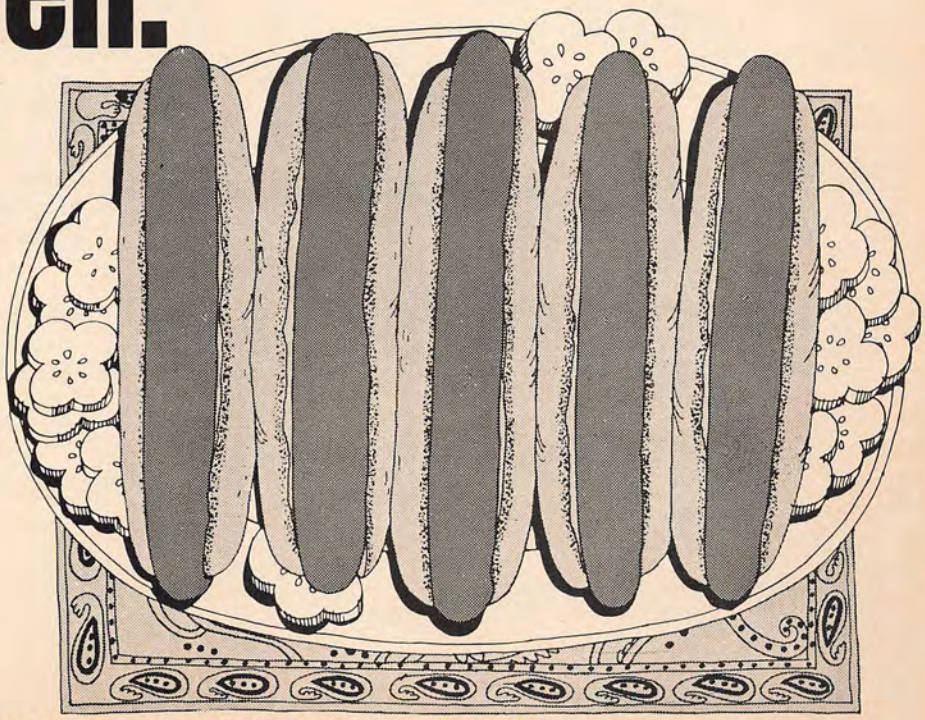

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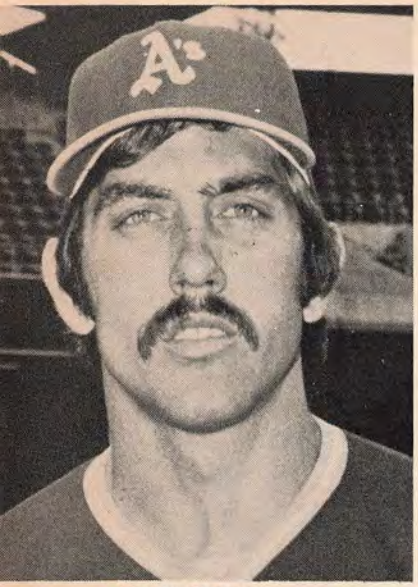
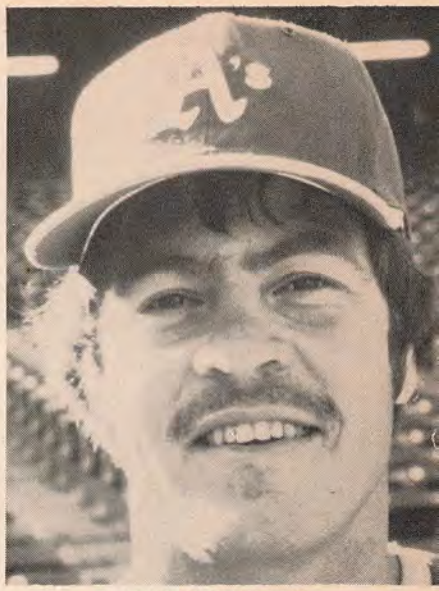


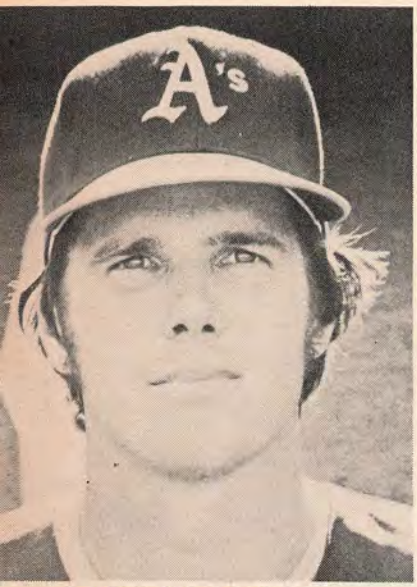
RAY FOSSE

Ray Fosse (10) is one of the reasons the A's are back in the World Series. Obtained from Cleveland in a late spring trade that sent Dave Duncan and George Hendrick to the Indians, Ray brought with him a rifle arm and a threatening bat that had driven in 41 runs going into September. Enemy runners have become increasingly wary of Ray's throwing accuracy and did not attempt thievery at the rate of past seasons.



DICK GREEN

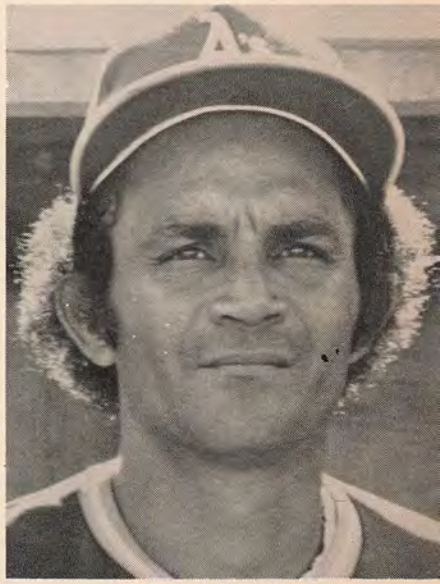
Dick Green (1) usually occupies the ninth spot in the A's batting order, but the keystoner is no easy out. Take a game in Anaheim Aug. 5 when the A's were in the second game of a 12-game road swing. Green was inserted at second base as a late-inning defensive replacement. The score was tied in the eighth when "Greenie" belted a game-winning grand slam. Going into September Dick had knocked in 36 runs and helped give the A's one of the best double play combos in the league.



MIKE ANDREWS

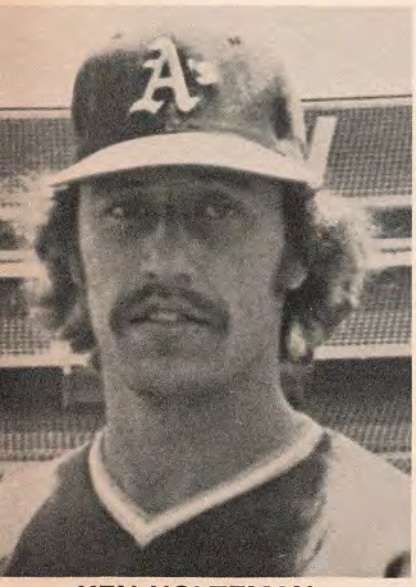
Ken Holtzman (30) was eyeing his first 20-game season as September rolled around and there was little doubt he'd make it. He got No. 19 Aug. 26 on a sparkling four-hitter to beat the Yanks' Mel Stottlemyre, 1-0. No. 18 came Aug. 17 in a six-hitter against Milwaukee. Ken's previous best season was in 1972, his first year with the A's. The former Chicago Cub bonus baby was 19-11 on the regular season and 1-0 in the World Series.

Mike Andrews (17) was purchased from the Chicago White Sox July 31 to add bench strength both with the bat and his glove at second base. An eight-year veteran, he had been placed on waivers by the Sox after he asked for his release July 10. Mike had hit .201 in 53 games with Chicago. Since joining the A's he has been used primarily as a pinch-hitter. He was born in Los Angeles, July 9, 1943, stands 6-2, weighs 200 and bats and throws righthanded.



VIC DAVALILLO

Vic Davalillo (37) was purchased from the Pittsburgh Pirates July 31 to add a lefthanded bat to the world champions' pinch-hitting depth. He has also been used defensively, both at first base and the outfield. Vic broke in with Cleveland in 1963 after setting the International League on fire the year before with a .346 average and 69 RBI at Jacksonville. He had his best year in 1972 with the Pirates, hitting .318 in 117 games. He was born July 31, 1936, at Cabimas, Zulia, Venezuela. He is 5-7 weighs 155 and bats and throws lefthanded.



KEN HOLTZMAN

Darold Knowles (32) is usually the first man out of the bull pen in emergencies that call for lefthanded relief. However, on Aug. 14 when Catfish Hunter's thumb fracture and Blue Moon Odom's stretch of ineffectiveness had the A's pitching rotation in a bind, Knowles was called upon by Dick Williams to start against the Red Sox. He responded with a six-hit shutout en roue to his first complete game as a major league picher. He also became only the second lefty to blank the Bosox in Fenway Park this season. The win, a 1-0 squeaker, kept the A's within a half game of the sizzling Royals. He was born Dec. 9, 1941, in Brunswick, Mo. He is 6-0, weighs 175 and bats and throws lefthanded. He has seven major league seasons to his credit, having started with the Orioles.

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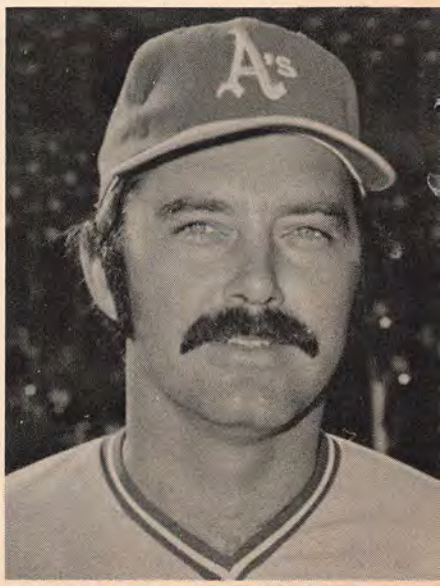
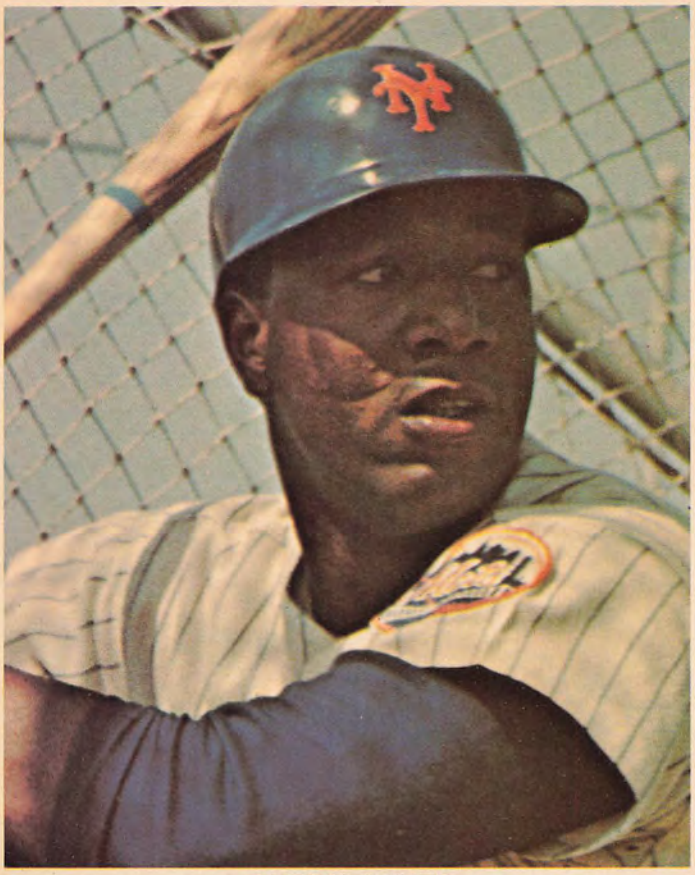


DAROLD KNOWLES

The Mets' Guns of August



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JOHN MILNER

TALE OF BULL PEN: TWO TUGS OF WAR

Continued from 7

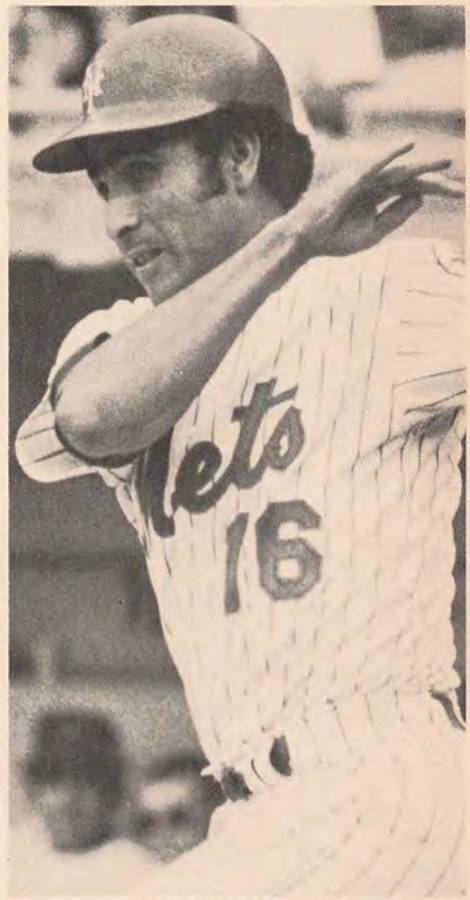
either won or saved the day. And down the spectacular home stretch in the National League's East, he was again "the best relief pitcher in baseball."

"He's got so much stuff, he has to win," said Jerry Grote, who was sidelined with a broken hand during most of Tug's slump. "When I started catching him again, we mixed his pitches, he got back his confidence in the curveball and fastball, and the hitters couldn't lay back for the scroogie."

"I've got a wife and two small kids, and there's no way I can accept the possibility that I can't pitch," Frank Edwin McGraw said. "When I came in to pitch that last Sunday in Shea, I heard the people holler and I got chills all over. We fought to get here, including me."

"You Got to Believe," read the sign held high in the box seats behind home plate by two nuns, whom McGraw had met when he first came up to the team in 1965.

"I believe," said Bob Scheffing, a longtime believer, "that he is the best relief pitcher in baseball."



FELIX MILLAN

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A STONE'S THROW AWAY: A DEAL BY METS, BY GEORGE

Continued from 20

He would be ready when they needed him.

They rarely needed him. The season was eight days old when he made his first relief appearance. The season was over a month old when he got his first start. The season was nearly seven weeks old when he made his first significant contribution.

It came on May 24 in Los Angeles when he pitched six shutout innings in the heroic 19-inning 7-3 win that ended at 4:42 A.M. New York time. It was his first win.

Stone started again on June 2 and thereafter it became routine. When the Mets supposedly fell out of the race in late July and early August, Stone continued to perform nobly. He was pitching and winning regularly, beating some very important Eastern Division people like the Pirates, the Cards, and the Cubs, and some important Westerners like the Reds. By late August the rest of his mates began catching on and stopped letting George do it alone. He had won eight straight games in the rush to the top.

Unsung part of the Mets' team is its medical team—the beaverishly busy Dr. Peter LaMotte and his aides, trainers Tom McKenna (left) and Joe Deer.

Even the heat of the pennant race did not seem to bother Stone. He remained calm, courteous, soft-spoken, a gentleman, seemingly unmoved by all the excitement.

"When there is something on the line," he said, "that's when I really enjoy pitching."

Stone, a graduate in physical education from Louisiana Tech and married to a school teacher who starred in all of the baseball games played by Mets wives this year, will return to school after the season.

Stone also is a basketball player of note around Louisiana and may help coach his alma mater's quintet while studying for his masters degree.

A year ago the only thing the Mets remembered about George Stone was the fact that he was the pitcher who accidently hit Rusty Staub in June of 1972. It just about terminated that season in New York.

The summer of 1973 was a lot more pleasant for both Stone and Staub. It all seemed to come into focus one night after Stone had pitched another strong game and Millan had helped with two hits and a brilliant fielding play. Tug McGraw looked at Millan with a straight face while Stone was being interviewed by the press.

"How does it feel, Felix," asked McGraw, "to be a throw-in on the George Stone deal?"

Met's Radio-TV Team

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BOB MURPHY

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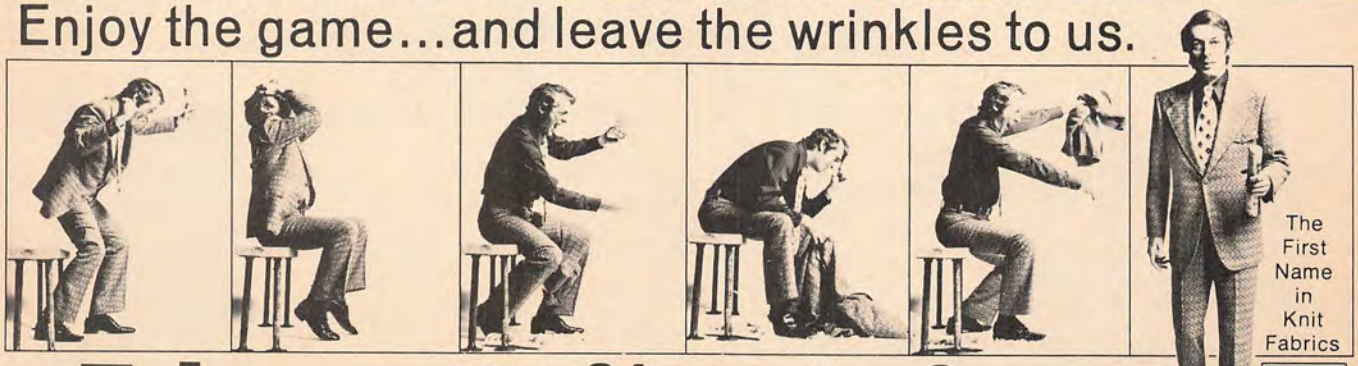

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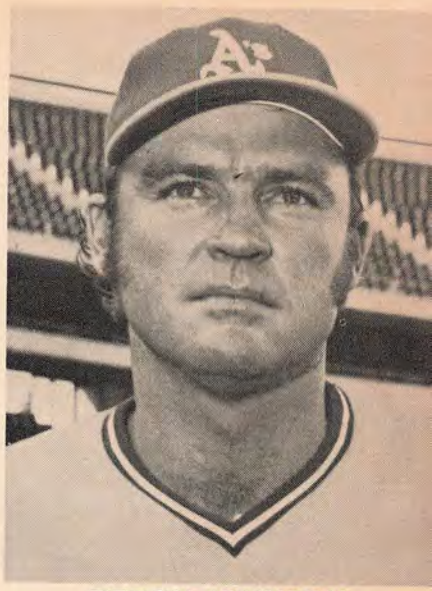
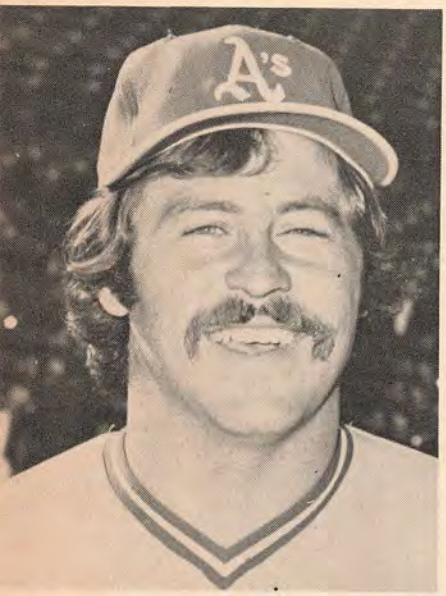
JESUS ALOU

Jesus Alou (2) became the third of the famed brother trio to play for the Oakland A's when he was purchased from the Houston Astros on July 31. The acquisition was made to beef up the A's hitting. It worked. Jesus hit at a solid .362 clip through August, going 25 for 69. He was even used as a designated hitter in one game to keep his hot bat in the lineup after Joe Rudi's return from the disabled list. Born March 24, 1943, at Haina, Dominican Republic, he is 6-2, weighs 195 and bats and throws righthanded.



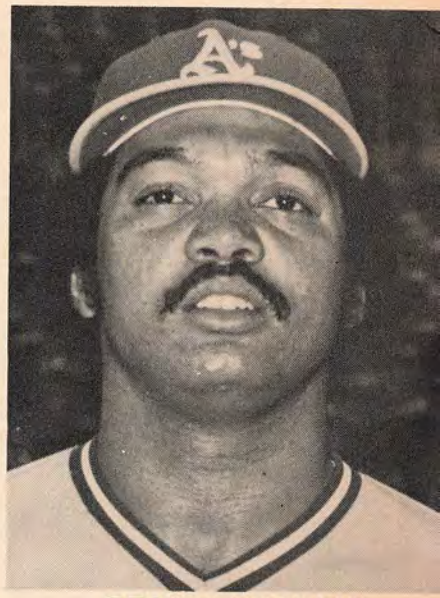
DERON JOHNSON

Deron Johnson (7) was purchased from the Philadelphia Phillies on May 2. Despite a late start, the 35-year-old veteran of 12 major league seasons consistently ranked among the top designated hitters throughout 1973. He came to the A's originally in 1961 in a trade with the Yankees. The Athletics, then in Kansas City, sold him to Cincinnati the following season. He was born July 17, 1938, at San Diego. He is 6-foot-1, weighs 209, bats right and throws right.



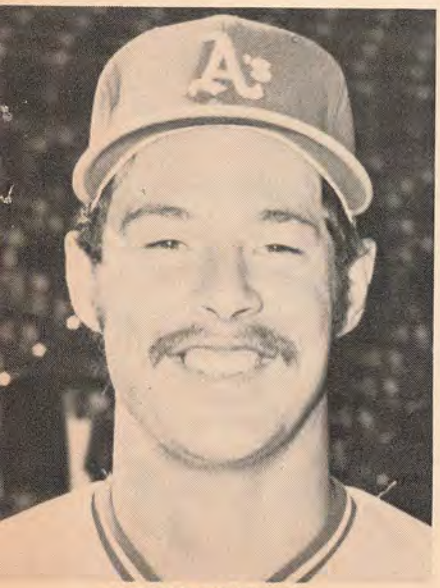
JIM HUNTER

Catfish Hunter (27) was bearing down on what could have been the most outstanding season for an American League pitcher in years, a season that could include a Cy Young Award. Along came the All-Star game July 24. Catfish tried to field a hot one through the box with his bare hand and the result was a hairline fracture of the thumb on his pitching hand. He was out of action for 30 days and his 15-3 record and 10 straight victories sat idle until Aug. 19 when he worked five no-decision innings against Milwaukee. It wasn't until his next start, Aug. 24, that Catfish got back on the winning track. He five-hit the Yankees in 7⅓ innings for his 16th win and 11th in a row. He made it two more for a 17-3 record through August.



REGGIE JACKSON

Reggie Jackson (9) wasn't likely to wind up with a season like he had in 1969 (47 homers and 118 RBI) but 1973 will certainly be more satisfying in that it'll be in a winning cause. As September came, Jackson's 105 RBI was tops in the majors and his 31 homers led the American League. No wonder the MVP drums were beating. And they got extremely loud in August, when Reggie went on a six-game tear with 15 hits in 24 trips, including five homers and 12 RBI. Included in the six games was a three-game series in New York where he went 9-for-13, hit three homers, drove in eight runs and scored seven himself.

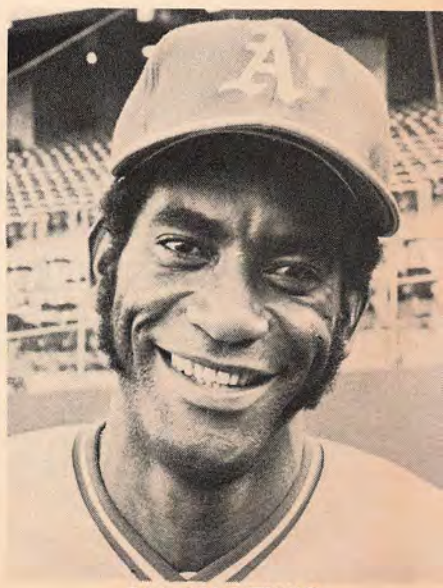


GENE TENACE

Gene Tenace (18) was converted into a first baseman since his 1972 World Series slugging heroics, a move designed to help him concentrate more on hitting. His thoughts paid off as he delivered 22 homers and knocked in 66 runs through August, en route to his best major league season. His ability to adapt to first base has caused little remembrance of Mike Epstein, whom the A's dealt to Texas in the off-season.

Allan Lewis (24) set a World Series record last autumn for most games as a pinch-runner (6) in one series. That's his specialty. Recalled from Birmingham Sept. 1, Lewis was used numerous times as a pinch-runner in the last month of the season. In 1966 he set a Florida State League record with 116 stolen bases. A 13-year pro, Lewis signed with the Kansas City A's in 1961. He is a native of Colon, Panama.

Continued on 53



ALLAN LEWIS

STORY OF YOGI: NICE GUY WHO FINISHES FIRST

Continued from 9

with Jockey shirts and joshes the generation gap. "Where did I go wrong?" Yogi asks plaintively of the audience at the end.

Where he almost went wrong was in doing the bit with his sons in the first place. Somebody questioned whether the participation of Timmy and Dale affected their amateur standing, particularly Timmy, who must deal at the NCAA level. Berra offered to have the commercial withdrawn, rather than risk his son's collegiate eligibility. Investigation proved to everyone's satisfaction that Yogi alone had been paid.

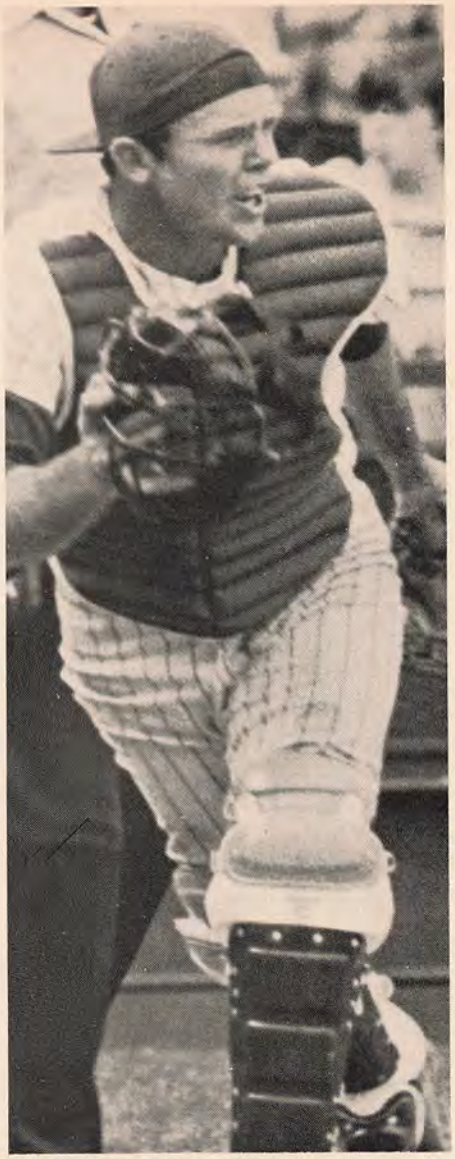
"Shooo" says Whitey Ford. "I could have told them Yogi got all the money. He always does."

That is part of the Berra legend; everything he touches turns to gold, or at least to rising stocks. It is a running gag among Berra's former teammates, who have not fared as fortunately as Yogi in the world of commerce. They are the glib ones, the good-looking ones, the sexy ones. He is the ugly-duckling, the grunt-and-groan conversationalist, and yet nobody has been able to talk him into a nebulous get-rich-quick tap-out. The same solid instincts he has for baseball seem to apply in his outside ventures.

Mantle Men and Namath Girls goes bust.

Yoo-Hoo soars.

Berra Luck they call it. It was ever thus. As a player, as a coach, they spoke always of Berra Luck. When the Yankees fired him for winning the '64 pennant, Berra was hired by the Mets to coach at an unheard of $35,000. He was lucky



When Jerry Grote (above) got well the Mets, too, started to get well.

enough at the time, in that George Weiss and Casey Stengel, his former bosses and friends, were running the Mets.

Technically, Yogi was taken on as player-coach, but after nine times at bat, with two soft singles to his credit, Yogi decided on his 40th birthday to call it quits. "I can't hit the fast ball anymore," he said, simply.

He had a sinecure. He was a showpiece coach under Stengel, under Wes Westrum, and under Gil Hodges. No real worries, no responsibilities to speak of. Then came the tragedy of Gil Hodges' death, and Berra was asked if he wanted to manage. Many, including Carmen Berra, thought he was nuts. Why invite the aggravation? He was set for life, good pay, no headaches.

Yogi Berra took the job. "I know I can manage. I want to manage again," he said. He signed for two years.

Suddenly, all the Berra luck of the ages turned sour. All the notes he had filed with Dame Fortune came due. Never has a big league manager had so many players cut down by injury in a span of two seasons. Rusty Staub . . . Cleon Jones . . . Jerry Grote . . . Bud Harrelson . . . John Milner . . . Willie Mays . . . they were just the big ones. They didn't have blisters, or the 24-hour virus. They were on the disabled list for long periods of time, many wearing plaster casts on broken bones.

Finally, in September of 1973, Yogi Berra had his ball club together again. They were well and the Berra Luck was manifest. While they had been injury-riddled, no other team in the NL East had run off with things. Below .500, the Mets had a chance to come back.

Suddenly, the moves Yogi made, the moves that had left him wide open for second-guessing, were working. There's something about a healthy team that can make a manager very smart. There's something about an effective Tug McGraw that can make Yogi Berra a genius. But one thing was Yogi's. He kept them free of pressure. He doesn't scream at them. He doesn't blow his cool.

The nice guy has finished first, and an awful lot of people are rooting for him. Charley Riva, who owns a gas station back in St. Louis, is rooting for him, and Charley Riva is the last guy Yogi Berra got mad at, when he was 13.

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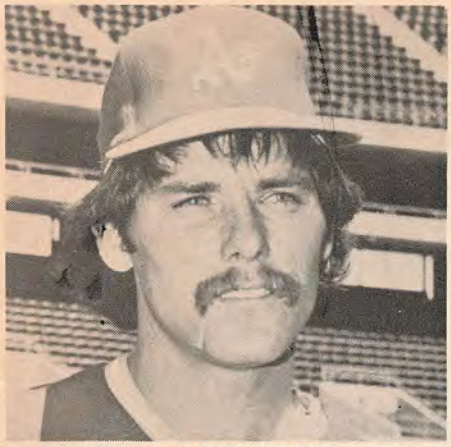
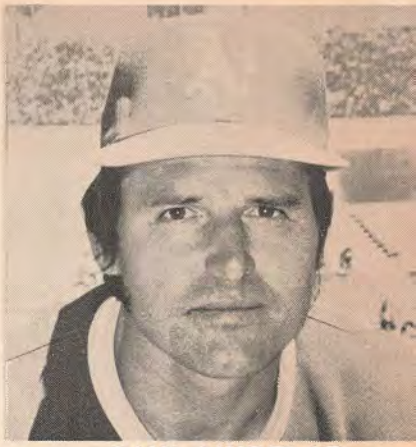
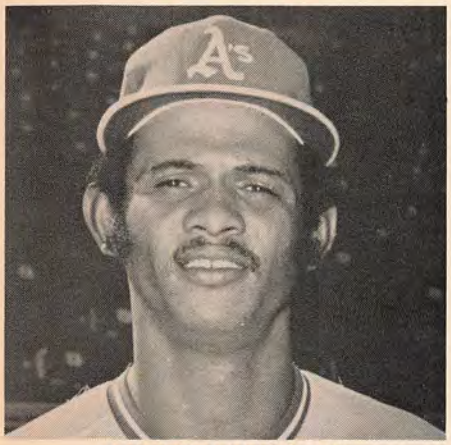


TED KUBIAK

Ted Kubiak (11) gives the club a solid man at second base, available for starting assignments or late-inning relief should the need arise for a pinchhitter for Dick Green. A horrendous mid-season slump contributed to Ted's .228 average going into September for the switch-hitting infielder.



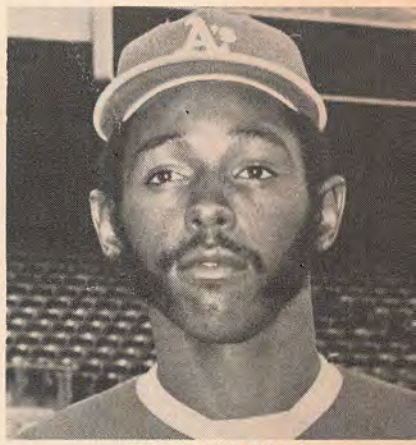
PAUL LINDBLAD



ANGEL MANGUAL

Paul Lindblad (25) has been called upon mostly as a mid-game reliefer, but in late July he was inserted into the starting rotation to fill a void left by Catfish Hunter. The luckless lefthander made two starts. Supported by only one run over those two appearances, he came out winless. He is a much more effective pitcher than his record indicates.

Angel Mangual (2) didn't see much action this season, but he is far from a forgotten man. It was in Game 4 of the 1972 World Series that Angel delivered one of the most important hits of his life and certainly one of the most crucial for the A's. With the score tied in the ninth, Gene Tenace on third and one out, Mangual was sent in to pinch-hit by Dick Williams. His ground single to right won the game and sent the Oakland Coliseum throng into a wild celebration.

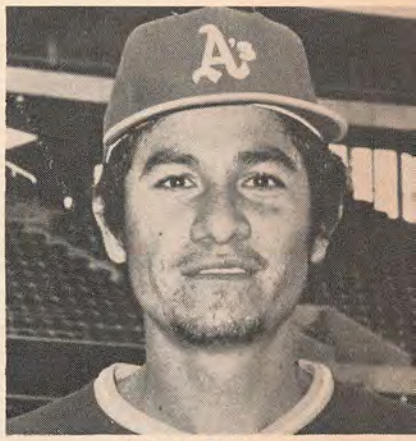


BILL NORTH

Bill North (4) was obtained from the Cubs in an off-season trade for Bob Locker. In the right place at the right time, he battled Billy Conigliaro for the starting centerfield spot in spring training and moved in fulltime when Billy C was placed on the disabled list early in the season with an injured knee. Since then, Bill has become one of the best centerfielder's in the league and the very best base stealer, with 43 through August. The fleet switch-hitter had also contributed a healthy .291 average to the A's attack.

JOHN ODOM

John (Blue Moon) Odom (13) has experienced a disappointing season for the most part after his sparkling 15-6 showing last year. Going into September, John had a 4-10 record and had been on and off the starting rotation. After one stint in the bull pen he earned a spot in the rotation again with a brilliant 3-1 decision at Boston Aug. 13 in a crucial game. He came through with another gutty performance Aug. 22 when he defeated Detroit, 7-3. Despite his off-year, record-wise, John is still a valued member of the A's.



HORACIO PINA

Horacio Pina (28) is the first man out of the A's bull pen in the early innings when manager Dick Williams is in need of righthanded relief. And more often than not, Pina does his job. He uses an unusual under-hand delivery and his assortment of pitches includes a slider, screwball and a riser. Pina came to the A's in an off-season swap that sent Mike Epstein to the Texas Rangers.

JOE RUDI

Joe Rudi (26) flew out to centerfield Aug. 20 against Detroit and received a loud ovation from the Oakland fans, an incident that led to several post-game jibes by his teammates. It was a significant occasion, however. Joe was making his first appearance since a thumb injury sidelined him July 26. A bout with strep throat led to a 16-day stay on the disabled list and the 1972 World Series defensive hero was making his first appearance for the A's since that time. Rudi had hit .242 and driven in 45 runs going into September.

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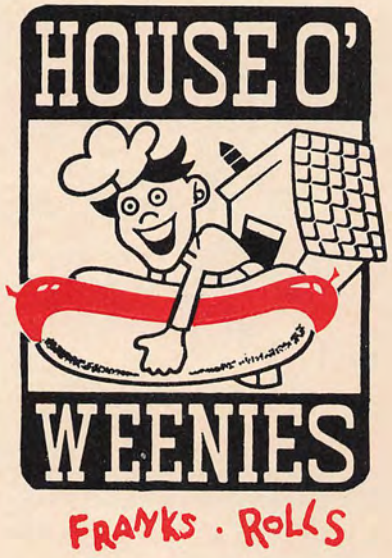
George Theodore (9) figuratively cashed a bet as "a thousand to one shot" in the sweepstakes for a superanumerary spot in the Mets' outfield during spring training this year. By camp's end he had achieved uncommon publicity and attendant identity, only to have an impressive Shea start marred by an injury that appeared to threaten his career. He suffered a dislocated hip in a July 7 collision with Don Hahn against the Braves. Incredibly, nine weeks later he discarded his crutches and made a Sept. 20 pinch-hitting appearance against the Pirates. Primarily an outfielder, he also played some first base before the injury. A 715th draft selection in 1969, he was named 1971 California League "Player-of-the-Year" on stats of .333, 28 home runs and 113 RBI at Visalia. He followed that with a .296 campaign for the top farm club at Tidewater.



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MIRACLE NO. 2: HIT OR MYTH IS A BIG QUESTION

Continued from 5

anguish and discontent.

Most of them were directed at the manager. He was roasted and toasted and rarely ever boasted, in the press. Through it all, Yogi Berra remained Yogi Berra. He kept insisting his club was still in the race. Even on July 8, when they were 12 games out of first place. Even on August 17, when they were 13 games under .500.

"We're not out of it until it's mathematical," he said in his fractured English. Everyone, of course, knew what he meant.

"Anything can happen in baseball. I've seen it," he said.

Yogi did not speak of miracles. He spoke of facts.

"You ain't got nothin' if you ain't got a bullpen," he said during a two month period when Tug McGraw was ineffective.

When, finally, McGraw did become the league's No. 1 relief pitcher again, the Mets in turn became "something."

Yogi surveyed the other clubs in the division. "They've all had hot streaks and we ain't had one yet," he observed. "If we could win eight in a row we could be right back in it."

This was early September. And, of course, you know what happened.

In spring training Yogi said 85 victories could win the division. He didn't miss by much, did he?

There was little talk of Miracle No. 2 most of the season. Who would have believed it in July or August? But then there was Tug McGraw suddenly re-discovering his fastball, his screwball and his curveball. Then there was Bud Harrelson recovering from two fractures and playing the best shortstop in the league.

And Jerry Grote, who lost his first string catching job last year and suffered a fractured wrist this season, coming back to become, as Jerry Koosman says, "the best damned defensive catcher in the league." And there was Rusty Staub playing all season, despite two damaged hands . . . John Milner overcoming a pulled hamstring that sidelined him for weeks . . . Cleon Jones out first with a strained wrist and later with aching feet . . . Tom Seaver pitching the most effective ball in the league and not winning for lack of runs . . . Wayne Garrett proving at last he's the third baseman the Mets have been looking for—and all the while he was right under their noses.

IT'S A MIRACLE: And a second after final out of 1969 "Impossible Dream" as winning battery Jerry Koosman & Jerry Grote embrace in pure, wild joy.

A part of the miracle-in-the-making came on September 20, when Pittsburgh's Dave Augustine hit a ball in the 13th inning that hit the point of the left field fence. It bounced back into Jones' glove and enabled him to cut down what loomed as a winning run at the plate via a relay from Garrett. In the bottom half of the inning a guy named Hodges—rookie Ron Hodges—drove in the run that enabled the Mets to win.

The following night more than 53,000 fans jammed Big Shea for the final game with the Pirates. Even before the first pitch they were chanting "We're No. 1!" And with six outs to go and Seaver leading by five runs, they began the rhythmic chant again and kept it up until the final out.

When the Mets did win to take first place, Shea exploded.

There were other indications of the miracle-in-the making . . . The pop fly in Montreal that Pepe Frias dropped the night the Mets swept a twi-nighter from the Expos . . . The funny bounces the ball took in that final series against the Pirates . . . A bad hop over the shortstop's head . . . The ball that hit third base . . . The ricochet off Garrett's glove that Bud Harrelson fielded in the hole against the Cards.

Someone even suggested Gil Hodges was sitting on the wall in left field keeping balls from going out.

Miracles don't happen. They are created. But by whom? Don't ask. Just keep believing.

INSTANT REPLAY OF 1969 MIRACLE #1

Continued from 15

tionally walked, lefty Pete Richert replaced Hall. Pinch hitter J. C. Martin bunted and when Richert's throw to first hit Martin on the wrist, the ball caromed away enabling pinch runner Gaspar to score. The Orioles later claimed Martin was out of the base path and should have been called out for "interference." Newspaper pictures proved inconclusive and the play, of course, was allowed to stand. Earl Weaver, incidentally, became the third manager in Series history to be ejected by an umpire, Shag Crawford, in the third inning for objecting too vociferously on ball-and-strike calls.

In the fifth game, the Orioles jumped on Koosman for three runs in the third inning when Belanger singled and McNally and Frank Robinson homered. In the sixth Cleon Jones was awarded first base when it was proved, by examining the shoe polish on the ball, that he had been hit by a pitch. Umpire Lou DiMuro had originally called the pitch a ball. Clendenon immediately followed with his third home run of the Series. Weis' circuit tied it in the seventh and the Mets clinched the game in the eighth on doubles by Jones and Swoboda and errors by Powell and Eddie Watt. The final score was 5-3 and the Mets were World Champions, hailed as "Miracle workers."

The old adage that "good pitching will always stop good hitting" was never proved more correct than in this Series. The heavy hitting Orioles had a combined average of .146. Powell had no extra base hits and Brooks Robinson managed only one single in 19 at bats for an .053 mark. Dave Johnson was at .063 and Frank Robinson at .188.

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1973 NEW YORK METS TEAM PICTURE

(As of June 25)

FRONT ROW: (Left to right) Trainer Tom McKenna, coaches Roy McMillan, Rube Walker, Eddie Yost, Joe Pignatano, trainer Joe Deer. SECOND ROW: Jerry Grote, Willie Mays, Wayne Garrett, Tug McGraw, Manager Yogi Berra, Felix Millan, Tom Seaver, John Milner, Duffy Dyer, Bud Harrelson. THIRD ROW: Equip. Mgr. Herb Norman, traveling sec. Lou Niss, Jerry May, Jim Gosger, Phil Hennigan, Jim Fregosi, Jim Beauchamp, Don Hahn, Ray Sadecki, Teddy Martinez, Ken Boswell, clubhouse attendant Bill Hampton. TOP ROW: Batboy Greg Cox, Harry Parker, Jerry Koosman, Ron Hodges, Cleon Jones, Ed Kranepool, George Stone, George Theodore, Jon Matlack, Rusty Staub, Jim McAndrew, camera technician Joe Fitzgerald, batboy George Palermo. (Pitcher Buzz Capra was in Chicago attending funeral of his father date of team photo.)

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